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## EDITORIAL

The present volume of our Institute's journal contains 5 papers and 1 book review. The paper on "Status, Hierarchy and Hinduisation in Pauri Bhuiyan Society in North Orissa" by Professor L. K. Mahapatra is based on the field work undertaken by the author in the Pauri Bhuiyan Society. He has noticed the quasi-hierarchical division in their society besides the status dichotomy between men and women. The Matiali (Children of the soil) section enjoys higher social status than the Parja (subjects) section and the two sections have also been analysed in the context of village community. The roles of men and women have been clearly delineated and it is revealed that although the Pauri Bhuiyan women are denied participation in political life, they enjoy participation in rituals and festivities organised in the village level. The social positions of sacerdotal and secular chiefs have been explicitly analysed. The author has further highlighted on the "incipient stratifications" and "status change in Government colonies". The section on the "Inter-community Status and Hinduisation" further reveals the inter-relationship between the Pauri Bhuiyan and caste Hindus and the process of Hinduisation.

The paper on "Status of Tribal Communities of Orissa" by Professor N. K. Behra is a comprehensive account of the Scheduled Tribes of our State. It analytically discusses the ethno-linguistic divisions, economic classifications, planned development efforts for socio-economic development with sectoral programmes, like agriculture, soil conservation, horticulture, co-operation, animal resources, health and family welfare, drinking water-supply, road communication, human resources development and education and references on land and forest. With this backdrop in view, the author critically examines the tribal development activities and puts forth some constructive suggestions.

The paper on "A Study of the Process of Change in the Life of the Primitive Tribes in Mayurbhanj : ORISSA" by Dr. Rajalaxmi Rath contains a general description on various Scheduled Tribes inhabiting Mayurbhanj district. The author then concentrates on the primitive tribal groups, like the Hill-Kharis and Markandia. The paper discusses various socio-economic development programmes, such as rehabilitation, agriculture, live stock, cottage industry, infrastructure, etc. Further, the impact of the schemes on beneficiaries has been analysed. At the concluding stage, the author incorporates some suggestions for more development inputs and popular participation.

The paper on "Ethnic Aspects of Indian Sago Palm (Caryota Ureng-L)—An Ethno-Botanical Study among Kutia Kondhs" by M. K. Jena, Klaus Seeland and K. K. Pattanaik reveals the traditional uses of Indian Sago Palm which are intimately inter-woven with the socio-cultural aspects of the Kutia Kondha lifestyle. The paper contains a vivid description of Sago Palm trees, yields and other uses and how the Kutia Kondha section of the larger Kondha community make use of the trees. Further people's perception, property ownership, socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-religious aspects connected with Sago Palm have been highlighted. The sections on the 'aesthetic scenario' and 'conservation policy' are flavoured with a deep sense of human approach.

The paper on "Indigenous Practices in Health Care" by Dr. S. Swain emphasizes on the methodology of documentation of herbal and medicinal plants found in interior parts. As the system of traditional indigenous practices in health care are facing extinction, the author feels the necessity of their appropriate documentation. As an illustrative case, the author has documented the names of plants/methods used for the control of conception and opines that their authenticity needs to be proved.

The current issue of the journal in its Book Review Section contains one review on the book titled, *Changing Values and Tribal Societies (A Comparative Study of the Mundas and Oras: Values Orientations)* authored by Professor A. R. N. Srivastava (1992).

The Editor expresses his heartfelt gratitude to esteemed contributors of papers and the members of the Editorial Board for their continued co-operation.

(EDITOR)

## Status, Hierarchy and Hinduisation in Pāuri Bhuiyān Society in North Orissa

L. K. Mahapatra

I had undertaken field work among the Hill Bhuiyān, or Pāuri Bhuiyān as the primitive tribal group called itself, in 1953-54 as Research Scholar of the Tribal Research Bureau, now known as Tribal and Harijan Research-cum-Training Institute. Though primarily I had taken up residence on the hill of Bonai in Tasā village, I had cultivated familiarity with some other villages in the valley below, like Derul with some lands seasonally irrigated by damming up a hill stream, or Budhābhūṭ along a hill stream, wedged between hills. Besides, I had undertaken some preliminary studies among the Pāuri Bhuiyān resettled in Daleisān and Dhokāmunda colonies with forest-cleared land under Government sponsorship. Some families from Tasā village had come down to resettle in a locality called Guhābandhā in Dhokāmunda colony. In a way, these Tasā families were coaxed and cajoled to come down the hill village, but were maintaining social, ritual and economic ties with the mother village even in 1957, when I had got the last reports for writing my doctoral thesis on the people at Hamburg University. The status and roles of village functionaries as also the basic dichotomy of the society between the high status *Māṭhāli* and *Parjā* of lower status were maintained even when the villagers were resettled at Guhābandhā. Another basic status dichotomy between men and women has also been taken up, as it is forcefully obvious in their society.

In the following pages, I deal with the basic quasi-hierarchical division of the society between *Māṭhāli* and *Parjā* and the ascribed and achieved statuses found in the society, besides discussing in general the role of wealth and power at the base of this hierarchy in village society. A discussion is presented on the social position of the Pāuri Bhuiyān in relation to other tribal groups and Hindu castes and their orientation to Hindu society in general in the region at the

junction of 4 ex-Princely States, namely Bonāi (at present in Sundergarh district), Keonjhar (at present constituting Kendujhar district), Pāli-zharā (at present in Dhenkūnāi district) and Bāmrā (at present in Deogarh district). The facts and relations described refer to the 1950's and most probably equally well, to the 1960's.

### Status, ascribed and achieved

Firth regards the social status of a person as 'his position in a social system, represented by the rights and privileges he enjoys and the obligations or duties he should perform' (Human Types, P. 103). Status may be "ascribed", that is, given by virtue of birth, or "achieved", that is attained by virtue of individual merits. The fact that ascribed status may be denied because of ritual, physical or mental deficiencies does not invalidate this important distinction.

We have seen above that the priests because of their vital roles in the economic life and physical well-being of the villagers enjoy high social status, as does the Headman for his socio-political leadership in corporate activities of the village. These are the most highly prized positions in the society which are open only to the 'Māṭhāli' section as a whole. Others who are not born in this group are debased from these offices and privileges.

Against these cases of ascribed status are available a wide range of opportunities for achieved social status. Through acquisition of paper knowledge one might attain the very important status of medicineman-cum-shaman, or at least a lower position of diviner-cum-exorcizer. The social status of the witches is not low, perhaps primarily because they come from the wealthiest households, but they also enjoy certain circumspcct consideration through fear, which impels villagers to be on good term with them,

As we have seen, the offices of Member of the 'Grāma Panchāyat' and his assistants have tended to be attained by 'Parjā' men. Assistants to the priests and priestesses are selected *ad hoc* and the senior 'Parjā' are usually welcome because of their experience. The messengers of the Village Assembly are junior 'Parjā' elders. Proficiency in singing, beating drums or tambourines, dancing, handicrafts, hunting or other skills, especially in making good speeches, brings prestige and thus contributes to the social status of a person.

Apart from such achieved status but closely allied to it is the higher status accorded to a married individual, especially to a family having its own household, the head of the household being automatically an elder of the Village Assembly.

Women are accorded a lower social status than that of men in general. They are, however, far from being chattels or repressed. Their contribution in the economic life is indispensable and vital, they may accumulate property of their own and bequeath it as they think fit, have almost as much say as their men have in household affairs and specially on the question of marriage of children, and they worship village deities and demons, and hold festivities of their own and sometimes act as a group. On the other hand, there is male precedence in rituals and festivities and exclusive male control of socio-political affairs of the village, easier divorce for the men and denial to the women of inheritance of important forms of wealth including land. In day-to-day life, however, they appear to be brave and independent and not at all complaining, and they do not have any trace of purdah system, which in rural west-Orissa is not so prominent as in the east. However, we have noted that even in food consumption they appear to be under privileged as in other aspects of life in this patrilineal and markedly patrilocal society. But the women proudly referred either to the high status of their parents of 'Māṭiālī' lineages of their ancestral villages or to their present incorporation in the 'Māṭiālī' clan-section.

The all important distinction of sex, and the fundamental division of the 'Māṭiālī' and the 'Parjā' based on birth in or outside the clan-section of the first-settlers, supplemented by differences of age, hold the key to social status in the village. Added to this are the position in the lineage and even the length of time a lineage from outside has settled in Tārā. The former

factor is very important in succession of traditional offices and inheritance and the latter, in the delegation of an important office ('Member') to the seniormost elder, of the oldest immigrant lineage from Id in Pal-Lahara. Thus viewed ascribed status is of paramount importance in the socio-political life of the village. However, it must be noted that opportunities for achieving status are increasing in the "unreserved" sphere of handicrafts or of new offices like member and his assistants or even of wealth.

#### The village community and 'Māṭiālī' and 'Parjā' sections.

Firth defines a human community as "...a body of people sharing in common activities and bound by multiple relationships in such a way that the aims of any individual can be achieved only by participation in action with others" (p. 41, 1951). Besides the aspect of living together, the term... "involves a recognition, derived from experience and observation, that there must be minimum conditions of agreement on common aims, and inevitably some common ways of behaving, thinking, and feeling" (p. 27, 1951). Obviously Tārā village is a community, into which people are born, in which they live, work, marry and die. Besides its territorial integrity, ritual and economic unity, social and political solidarity and general behavioural conformity, the community has also some local pride and distinctiveness in many ways as against the adjacent villages. The hamlets may be taken as sub-communities.

But this should not cover up certain fundamental divergence of status and roles, power and wealth, in general, of interests between the two segments of the community, the 'Māṭiālī' and the 'Parjā'. The 'Māṭiālī' are descended from the first settlers of Tārā and formally incorporate the immigrant families of 'Parjā' on the oath that the latter would recognize the former's authority and obey the 'law of the land' including the local rituals and other customs. The very term 'Parjā' means "subjects" and 'Māṭiālī' stands for "children of the soil", who have right as 'Khunkhīdār' or first settlers who cleared the forest.

As these groups ultimately derive their character from their divergent relations to the village territory, in this sense these are here viewed as territorial groups. The 'Māṭiālī' group forms a clan-section as described above, while the 'Parjā' group is an amorphous body of immigrant families. The latter's "group" character is

understandable in contradistinction to the 'Māṣūjī' group, especially at the time of the ceremony of founding the village (hamlet) site, at drinking of beer with the priests and at the funeral ceremony which I had attended. At the first one an immigrant family is formally awarded the status of a village, or if already living at Tarjā, is required formally to re-affirm his loyalty to the 'Māṣūjī' section in the name of the Headman and the priests and is to prepare some native beer for the ceremony. Now in cases of incorporation the incumbent has to feed the village (hamlet) in a ceremony of 'Uburā-Sabarā' or ritual purification. In the other two cases the 'Parjā' as a group were entertained apart from the 'Māṣūjī' and the 'Bandhu' (affinal relatives from outside). At the funeral ceremony the 'Parjā' were first greeted and welcomed and then the 'Bandhu', the 'Māṣūjī' group playing the host. This latter occasion demonstrated the precedence of specific territorial ties with the 'Parjā' (who are also 'Bandhu' or affinal relatives) over the 'Bandhu' which is a pure Kingroup.

Formerly, the 'Parjā' had no claim to any important official functions except being assistants to priests. The opening of the "Grama Panchāyat" or council of villages has created a new avenue for good orators among the senior members of 'Parjā'.

#### Wealth and Power

While dealing with indebtedness we have already noted that there are about 7 households which are considered well-to-do in the sense that they do not go hungry in the lean months. Only one family, a recent immigrant from Khaḍkū where they have agricultural land and fruit-trees, can claim to be wealthy with about 200 Kilo paddy as a saving. There is another well-to-do 'Parjā' household, also recent immigrant from Khaḍkū with landed property, from which some share in the proceeds comes yearly, as in the other case. Along with 5 'Māṣūjī' households they also save some money. One well-to-do 'Māṣūjī' household has some paddy saved, because there are only two souls in the family and as a priest at Kumudih the remuneration is of some good amount. Moreover, the household is a bit miserly.

The 'Māṣūjī' section claims 18 households and the 'Parjā' 19. Living houses excluding the livestock sheds and including the sheds for husking lever where it is separately constructed, we find the 'Māṣūjī' have 37 huts between

them and the 'Parjā' 29. The difference becomes more marked when we come to consider cattle and maize-gardens. Thirteen households of the 'Māṣūjī' have one or more cattle as against only 7 households among the 'Parjā'. Similarly, all the 18 'Māṣūjī' households have one and in some cases two plots of maize-gardens while only 5 'Parjā' households "own" a plot. Of course, a few more 'Parjā' could obtain a plot by standing drinks for the village elders. Kitchen garden is similarly scarce and almost monopolized by the 'Māṣūjī' section. One might argue: first come, first served. But the fact is that there is a number of have-nots. Even there are some plots cultivated by the 'Parjā' with permission of their legal "owners". If we take the wooden husking lever as an instance of capitalization of effort, there are 6 among the "Māṣūjī" and 3 among the 'Parjā'. Hurricane lanterns purchased more for show than for use were found with 5 'Māṣūjī' households and those 3 'Parjā' households who had or have intimate associations with plains-people in Pal-Lahara and Barma. Out of 10 plots of agriculture-terraces 8 belong to the 'Māṣūjī' group. They also own the great majority of jackfruit trees.

We have seen before how production is correlated with working hands and industry; therefore wealth increases social status. Wealth by itself hardly leads to power. Of the two 'Parjā' well-to-do households, the one wealthiest has little power. Power is shared now only with the oldest and nearest immigrant lineage in the village. Partly the motivation may be to keep the centre of new power at a safe distance in a hamlet where the Headman does not reside.

It remains just to be pointed out that the 'Parjā' owe loyalty to the 'Māṣūjī' section as a whole, and to the priests and the Headman in particular, and to the dāsties and demons of the village territory. They have to stand some native beer as something like a yearly tribute. Besides all the households had been contributing paddy for the 'Dohurā Dhanā' or 'Priestly Granary', collected and managed by the priests and the Headmen. At the time of its dissolution in 1950-51 as an institution of the total village, the paddy was distributed among the 'Māṣūjī'-families, though a half of the cereals was used in feasting the village. On the occasion of occupying awidens senior priests and the Headman demarcate the shares on the spot.

Thus, the 'Mājāli' group, deriving power ultimately from their descent from the first settlers of the village, are on the whole better off, own greater wealth, and exercise power over the 'Parjā' as a whole to the material advantage of their group interests. The leadership however, lies in the hands of senior priests and the Headman, and of late is shared in a secondary non-traditional sphere with a 'Parjā' of an influential lineage. Among the women the older priestesses exercise leadership assisted by elderly 'Parjā' ladies.

#### Men and Women

Men of the village or hamlet act as a group as participants in the village (hamlet) assembly, on hunting and fishing trips, in village (hamlet) rituals when a male representative from each household is required to partake of the offerings, in general drinking of beer or feasting on other communal occasions. They also cook and serve all the assembled men and women in funeral and marriage ceremonies. They meet daily in the bachelors' dormitory or on 'Manda Darabāra' outside around the fire to gossip and deliberate. The men act and interact as a group almost daily round the year. Of course, here the children are excepted.

The women, however, come together as a group on only a few occasions. The rituals 'Dhuhūji Bhaspā' and 'Rahaji Bhaspā' are organized and executed exclusively by the women, when they partake of the offerings. On the day of 'Dhuhūji' the women play the most important roles in the worshipping of 'Bajām' deity reciting what appears to be origin-myths, besides staging a mock hunting in men's dress. On the occasion of 'Pankhāi Pihā' day, they as a body cook and offer the cakes and flowers to the menfolk in general. Similarly, they also offer cakes to older men and youngmen on the occasion of 'Rahaji Bhaspā' ceremony. Occasionally, they cook food together out of some village funds and distribute the food household-wise. As the men work under the guidance and leadership of priests and Headman, the women also are guided by elder women of the priestly families, who alone worship in the rituals.

Although the women act as a group on much fewer occasions, they nonetheless fulfill important functions in the rituals and festivities of the hamlet as a whole. However, they never come together from all the households in the whole village as a group-unlike in the case of men,

except at the time of funeral and marriage ceremonies when they eat together the food cooked and served by men.

In fairness to the women it must be remarked that collecting of tubers and yams, fruits or flowers, etc., does not yield to organised exploitation as hunting or fishing by men, and participation in political life of the village is denied to them. These facts together shut them off from a great many opportunities for corporate action. However, in comparison with Hindu villages the participation of women as a body in the village rituals and festivities should be remarkable.

#### The Priests

The Dehuri 'barnas' or maximal lineage is the seniormost in the 'Mājāli' section and supplies the priests. On rare occasions, however, some senior members of the Nāika 'barnas' may officiate when the regular priests are ill or involved in ritual pollution.

The priest (Dehuri) for 'Baram' deity is of the highest rank, that of 'Gānshri' and the 'Pāi' deities and 'Nishār' comes in the second position while the priest for the 'Sarani Pāi' occupies the third rank.

Strangely enough, the priest of 'Bharāli Pāi' the highest deity of the 'Betiā Bār' organisation, is relegated to a lower rank than that of the priests for the village deities. This might be due to the fact that the village deities have much more important roles in the rituals touching upon the economic life and security system than 'Bharāli Pāi' has. For the latter the junior-most sub-lineage had always provided the priest, as a rule.

The priesthood is usually hereditary in the sub-lineage, but not strictly so. 'Bajām' priest has come not from the senior-most sub-lineage, which had, however, taken care of 'Gānshri' and the other 'Pāi' deities. The eldest son usually takes over the duties; if he is young or incapable, then the next brother has the privilege to serve. The division of the village into hamlets has loosened the succession to priesthood.

The priestesses do not have any emoluments except a sumptuous meal with meat and social prestige. A village priest, that of 'Gānshri' and 'Brahmaji Pāi', was once helped by the men of the hamlet in cutting of his new swidden, and had to stand only native beer. Besides this a priest who worships on the ceremonial hunting says gets a special share of the game.

However, the *Tsara* priests serving in three valley villages, Kumudih, Sarcuā and Renpāl, got handsome presents including cloth, and the priest of Kumudih had even a few agricultural plots on service tenure. As the *Tsara* 'Māṣāṣi' had lived in these villages in the valley, only they could worship and appease the deities and demons of the neighbourhood.

#### The Village Headman

The village Headman or 'Nāika' comes from the Nāika 'bamsā' or maximal lineage. The eldest son always has the right to this office. But when the would-be 'Nāika' is a minor the next younger brother of the former 'Nāika' may manage the affairs. In Derulā because the father was quite old (about 90), the eldest son was handed over the office.

The Headman takes active interest in the well-being of the village, its cultivation and law and order situation. He is formally recognised by the local police-station at Mahulpadā and thus by the Government. All transactions of the Government officials were formerly directed to him alone and at present divided in some minor respects with the "Panchāyat" Member.

But he is far from being an autocrat. He is the most powerful spokesman of the village and the first among equals, though these "equals" are the 'Māṣāṣi' people of the village. He first introduces a topic to be decided upon by mentioning the gravity, the urgency or simply the import of the occasion, and then listens to the opinions proffered by senior elders, 'Māṣāṣi' and 'Parjā'. From time to time he sums up the discussion and puts some critical points of decision for further ratification or clarification. Though he is implicitly obeyed his approach in commanding people is courteous and cautious in being often an indirect instruction. However, we have noted already how the Headman reinforces his authority with sorcery, of which he and his wife are suspected.

Apart from the social precedence shared with senior priests he enjoys no emoluments of any significance. Sometimes the villagers may work for him and get sumptuously fed for that. Formerly he had a special share on the day of successful ceremonial hunting. But he was also to give a suitable counter-present.

A junior Headman was responsible for internal day-to-day affairs in Tal Tasrā. After his shifting to Upar Tasrā, I found nobody working as such in 1967.

#### The "Panchāyat" Member

This new office has been introduced in 1963 when the "Grama Panchāyat" (Council of Villages) Act of the Orissa Government came into effect in Mahulpadā region. Every village was to send an elected Member to the council which sat at least once a month. In a village assembly composed of elders of both the hamlets, a senior intelligent man of the priestly lineage, a good speaker, was elected unanimously for Tasrā. One 'Parjā' elder, known to be a good speaker and a right-hand man of the Headman was also selected as an assistant or 'Sipāi' to the Member.

After the death of the member a senior 'Parjā' from old Iti lineage, an experienced speaker, having some experience with plains-ways, was elected as his successor. The other 'Parjā' elder and another good speaker, a 'Kutumb' of the 'Māṣāṣi' group, both from Upar Tasrā, were appointed as 'Sipāi' or assistants. In both cases the Members were from Tal Tasrā. As the power and authority of the Member might directly clash with that of the Headman, it was advisable that the new locus of power was kept at a distance in Tal Tasrā. We have also noted that many in Tal Tasrā and some in Upar Tasrā also suspected sorcery inflicted by the Headman causing death to the former Member. This happened allegedly because of the latter's popularity and rising prospects of his emerging a rival to the Headman's power. Such motivations might have goaded the Headman to provide for some handy safeguards in nominating assistant (s) faithful to him and under his direct control in Upar Tasrā. That his fears are not ill-founded is now somewhat clear. After the junior Headman's shifting to Upar Tasrā, and as there was nobody from the 'Nāika' lineage in Tal Tasrā, the Member had been managing the day-to-day affairs in the capacity of a junior Headman.

#### Diviners, Medicinemen and Sorcerers

Ordinary diviners are known as 'Sagunā'. They not only divine but also exercise disease-spirits or deities. Diviners of higher order, especially dealing with suspicion of sorcery, are 'Rājūṣi' or medicinemen. The latter can work against sorcery and may also prescribe certain herbal medicines. All the 'Rājūṣi' in Tasrā are 'Chedunā' or those who may counteract sorcery but cannot inflict. A 'Rājūṣi' also gets possessed by spirits or deities and



may be compared to shamans. Shamanism is very widespread in the region, even the *Caśī*, a Hindu caste, employ shamans on serious crises like difficult labour. Sorcerers are known as 'Pānggā' and sorceresses as 'Pānggi'. Diviners, medicinemen and sorcerers (Sorceresses) learn their trade from 'Guru' or teacher-experts and their specialized education is the nearest approach to formal instruction.

A medicineman enjoys high prestige in the village because of his capacity to save lives and cure diseases. A diviner is approached for smaller ailments and is the person of first call and has the tendency to function like a "family doctor". There are about 2 medicinemen as against 4 or 5 diviners. It is perhaps not without significance that both the Members of *Tarū* were either 'Rāulā' or 'Sagunā'.

However, sorcery is discredited and considered a crime, but the sorcerers and sorceresses are feared and one dare not anger them for nothing. This potential threat of sorcery becomes a good weapon for maintaining power as in the Headman's case. But in extreme cases of sorcery one might be expelled from the village.

#### Incipient Stratification

Fifth notes: "When a graded system of statuses is of general operation in a society, affecting many spheres of social activity, it is termed a system of social stratification. Here, each stratum or layer in the grading scheme is composed of people who fill much the same position in the social structure". (Human Types, Para. 105). Obviously, there must be two horizontal layers at the least. We have seen how and to what extent the 'Māijū' section has social precedence, economic advantages, political power and ritual control over the 'Parjā', who are led and guided by the other. The latter's higher social status is always acknowledged by the 'Parjā'. The lowest occupation, that of day labourer, is also resorted to by the 'Parjā' in great numbers and shunned by the 'Māijū' except for the two or three helpless widows. When it comes to carrying something for a visiting official it is the poorer 'Parjā' who are ultimately prevailed upon to do; when erecting my house even old 'Parjā' men were working while younger senior priests and the Headman were just directing most of the time. Costlier marriages and funeral (cremation) also fall largely to the 'Māijū'.

All these and other details described above go to show that there is some sharp break between the 'Māijū' and the 'Parjā', however relative it may appear in day-to-day life. The 'Māijū' section resembles in many ways a landholding aristocracy and the 'Parjā', commoners or second-class citizens. The designations even as analogy must be sharply trimmed to have real meaning in the actual situation. Though the 'Māijū' were descended from the first settlers they do not expressly claim that all land belongs to them and them alone. On the other hand, they emphasise that every villager has right to get land according to his needs for making swiddens, and for other purposes when there is suitable land. Under these circumstances I have defined the land-tenure as "corporate village ownership". Moreover, both the 'Māijū' and the 'Parjā' must work hard for their subsistence, and there is no "leisure" class. As for the rank of the 'Parjā' (literally, "subjects"), to compare them with commoners is to disregard the fact that in the recent, or back in the remote, past each of these 'Parjā' ancestors belonged to the 'Māijū' section of the ancestral villages. Even today they cherish the memory of their higher social rank in ancestral villages.

Even under such limitations and with free intermarriage between the 'Parjā' and 'Māijū', it appears there is some sort of loose social stratification between the compact, powerful, numerous, 'Māijū' section and the 'Parjā' from diverse lineages and villages, an odd assortment of affinal relatives owing individually and collectively the overall loyalty to the 'Māijū'. That is a legitimate right of the 'Māijū' to be the traditional leaders and loci of power in the village is accepted by all parties.

If the image of such a loose nascent stratification does not conform strictly to the classical models of "estates" ("Stand" in German) or "class", that is not of fundamental importance. The more significant point of observation is, that in an apparently "egalitarian" society may lie hidden a strong tendency to formation of something like classes or estates in whatever rudimentary form it may be. Dr. Elwin has already discovered a clearer formation of social classes among the Hill *saṛā*, where the aristocracy prefer their sons to marry within the aristocracy and may accept girls from, but never marry their own into, the commoners, named "proletariat" by him (P. 50-52).

### Status change in Government Colonies

As all the colonists have come together to an unoccupied area are no 'Māpūjī' rights in socio-political status. But the 'Māpūjī' section of the mother-villages retains the posts of Headman and Priests as usual. Although 'Dihabandhānī' ceremony (village Site Foundation day) is still observed one of the main purposes, that is, admission of new 'Parjā' and reassurance of loyalty of the old 'Parjā' has lost its meaning. But the Pūjī as a whole have gained some political power over the Cerengā Kolha and the few Bengkār colonists. The Pūjī are in majority, the whole scheme was mainly to bring them down and the visiting officers and permanent officials give more weight to the Pūjī Bhuiyān in all affairs of colony life. The Cerengā Kolha are 'untouchable' and of lower status. At Gūhābandhā colony, where they live away from the Bhuiyān, the domination of the latter is more obvious than in the exclusively Cerengā colonies with their own headmen and priests. At Gūhābandhā they are asked to contribute for 'Debi Usā' and perhaps many other festivities of the Pūjī Bhuiyān in the name of the village, while the Pūjī do not contribute anything in their rituals. This has been so for three reasons. Firstly, the Cerengā had come to settle one year or more later than the Bhuiyān of Tarā who all came in a group, which is numerically the majority and dominant group, supplying the headman and the priests. Secondly, the Cerengā had always acknowledged the Bhuiyān as the Lords of the land and themselves as their 'Parjā', rather figuratively, so much so that in the Mahulpadā valley they would not collect thatch-grass before the Bhuiyān do, where the interests clash. Thirdly the Pūjī Bhuiyān have always worshipped the village deities in the valley village of Jagati, Mahulpadā, Barouā, Rengāliand Kumudiā, where formerly the Cerengā Kolha lived. I suspect the Pūjī Bhuiyān of Daleisara colony have similar status of dominance over the Cerengā Kolha of Ratā Khandi colony. Incidentally, Patnaik has always referred to the Cerengā Kolha of the colonies as 'Mundā', as they speak a Mundāri language (GRI, 1957).

Patnaik has rightly pointed to the weakening position of the Headman and senior priests in the colonies (GRI, 1957, p.-13). But he does not fully explain the situation when he says, "The causes of their ineffectiveness in the village are obviously due to contacts with outside people and the gradual breakdown of the village solidarity after wet cultivation has been introduced" (ibid, P. 13).

In the next sentence, he implies, village solidarity is impaired, as in "wet cultivation (agriculture) economic interdependence and constant (frequent) need for co-operation are not necessary as they are in the cultivation of 'biyapā' (kamlin) or shifting cultivation. (Brackets enclose the terms preferred). Sharing cattle and implement and much co-operative labour are not necessary or possible in the colony as the Governmental help and the insistent need for reclaiming land by each household for its private exploitation have made a household autonomous and acquisitive to that extent. On the other hand, the older pattern of celebrating village rituals and festivals, communal partnership groups for arranging them, collective hunting expeditions, however few, and the bachelors' dormitories on the colony basis and even having the institution of Priests' Granary or 'Dehura Dhanā' in Kunatoli and Jhinikar Gahāri colonies (from Kunu and Kundā hill-villages) show that the old village solidarity is still much preserved. However, the custom of joint cultivation of a swidden by the youngmen and maidens of a colony for their own common interests, as in hill villages, was preserved till forests were available to make swiddens. As the land was reduced into agricultural plots, privately owned, this automatically stopped. In this instance the village or colony solidarity of the young persons suffered heavy economic and social deprivation due to conditions of agriculture. The treat to village solidarity came also from two other sources. Firstly, some colonies Gūhābandhā and Eupādī, are composed of colonists from two or three or even more villages. Moreover, a few colonies like Gūhābandhā may be composed of two or more tribes, Pūjī, Cerengā and Bengkār. In this condition colonies present different physical composition from the old exclusive Pūjī villages. When Pūjī colonist from a hill village have stayed in an exclusive colony together they have preserved even 'Dehura Dhanā', pointing to the solidarity of and surviving allegiance to, the 'Māpūjī' section of those villages. Secondly, unlike in a hill village the colonists are not bound to pay allegiance to any definite section in the colony for the rights in land and other facilities. All are given equal chances, legally of course, and all owe loyalty directly to the Government, represented by their big visiting officers. There is no solid dominant 'Māpūjī' section having first rights and no clustering of the 'Parjā' round it, and hence the political composition of the old village solidarity will be lacking. Where the fiction of this old 'Māpūjī-Pūjā' relationship persists, because of a

total transplantation of the village, in that case the village, solidarity of the old type appears to hold on in the colony. Thus both the decrease in old village solidarity and the weakening of the position of former Headman of a Pauri village, in fact the spokesman and leader of the 'Matali' section, among the colonists may be further explained in terms of the altered political and economical status derived wholly from outside authority and outside traditional territory, and not merely in terms of settled agriculture and "contacts with outside people" as such. Fundamentally for this reason, reinforced by direct and daily contacts with the authority of government officers and officials, visiting or stationed at Daleisarā colony, the old village solidarity and the old position of the Headman and Priests in the colony will be impaired still more. That my interpretation of the dynamics of this change is basically sound is supported by Patnaik's following observation in 1960, when shifting 'cultivation was in full swing at Daleisarā colony, "The position of Māek (headman) is being lowered and his voice is becoming less and less effective in the management of village affairs." (GRI, 1962, P. 24).

#### Inter-Community Status and Hinduization

In the Kolā valley round Mahulpadā the Gond and Pāṇ untouchables count along with the Pāṇ Bhuiyān as the earliest settlers. Cerengā Kolha and latter on Kisaṇ came before the various Hindu castes and Mundāri and Mundā Kolha immigrants. The present Headman of Mahulpadā, whose grandfather came from Sibinjā in the north-west, belongs to the eldest Casā cultivator family in this area. The village servant castes, water-men and cowherds, blacksmiths, oilmen, washmen, liquor-sellers etc. came to join the thriving villages. A Brahman priest comes from a faraway village to serve the Casā, Gour and Gond castes. The Gond, calling themselves as Rāj Gond, are here completely Hinduized, and count as a clean Hindu caste employing Brahman priest, washerman and barber, although the washmen do not serve them water in rituals or festivities and water from them is not accepted by higher castes like Casā, Gour (watermen and cowherd), Barber, Brahman. The barber family at Mahulpadā was brought in 1854 expressly to serve the higher caste people of Mahulpadā region.

The Hill Bhuiyān, though not yet served by Brahman and only occasionally by a Barber, require washmen at all important rituals and

water is accepted from them by all castes and tribes. In the latter aspect they are in a higher ritual status than the Gond and the Mundāri from whom the higher castes do not take water. The Pāṇ on their part take water only from Casā, watermen and cowherds, and Brahman. However, they will not accept cooked rice from even Brahman, not to speak of other castes and tribes. As in actual life some adjustment has to be made with the numerous Gond clients in Kumudih and Rengā, and other villages where Pāṇ Bhuiyān priests worship village deities, they accept rice-cakes fried in oil, but not boiled in an earthen pot, from perhaps the last two castes only in 1954. For the Pāṇ-Bhuiyān the basketmaker and musician Ghāsi, Pāṇ and Cerengā Kolha are untouchable, as also Kamār, blacksmith who use hellcow of cow-hide. In this bias they identify themselves with all clean castes. The Pāṇ have left eating buffaloes, while the other untouchables have not yet done that. In the schools at Daleisarā and Dhokimungā teachers take into consideration this bias of Pāṇ colonists against Cerengā Kolha ones. The Bengkār tribals are not untouchable, though water is not accepted from them by their co-brethren, the Pāṇ Bhuiyān. The Mundāri who have left eating cattle are sitting by side with the Pāṇ Bhuiyān at Mahulpadā or Doruā schools.

The Gond and Pāṇ castes and the Kisaṇ are at present striving hard to raise their social and ritual status. The Gond demand to get their menstruating women's clothes washed by the washmen, who do this only in case of Casā and Gour in the locality. But the washmen did not agree to this demand in their caste council. The Pāṇ have now taken to worshipping 'Bārī Dabī', a locally popular Hindu goddess, separately on their own and are trying to stop their practice of removing dead cattle from the villages including that of the Pāṇ Bhuiyān colonies. This function will in all probability be taken over by Ghāsi untouchables. Some Kisaṇ have gone so far as to engage good Brahman in their marriage ceremonies, and a Gour man serves water at these ceremonies to the Brahman priest, as he would not accept water from the Kisaṇ. It may be foreseen with all probability that the Pāṇ Bhuiyān in colonies will try to engage Barber and later on even Brahman priest at their marriages, besides accepting cooked rice from the Brahman. The last practices may not come soon, as the Bāthudā

in Koonjhar, since long Hinduized, would not accept such food from any outsider caste even in 1950.

Of especial importance is the relation of the Pāṣṭi Bhuiyān with Magadhā Gouṛ, who often live with the latter. Marriages with a Gouṛ man or woman is not rare, and as early as 1896 D.A. Mac Millan had already noted them. As Tasiā an old man had married a Gouṛ woman (in 17 p.) who was socio-ritually accepted into the Pāṣṭi society at a "Bā" celebration, similarly, a Gouṛ of Battamund village in Bonai married a Pāṣṭi woman, who was assimilated into the Gouṛ caste in 1957.

We have already seen how the Pāṣṭi borrow seed and grains, sometimes even money, from Gouṛ Gouṛ, Caṣā, Pān. Teli (oilman) or Shundi (liquor seller) and even a Cereṅgā Kolha. After coming to the colony some Tasiā Bhuiyān had taken loans from Khungāṅgā in the north-west. Their credit-worthiness, not only the area of credit operations, seem to have increased. When they would be able to get loans at 25% interest in the valley, and from the Government granary at Kumudih, the bitter feeling against the money-lenders and their castes might disappear.

There is "jajmani" system of fixed patronage for washermen, cowherds, barbers, and blacksmiths in the valley. A washerman or blacksmith served a few villages and no other man conventionally enters into cooperation by offering the same services. The Barber and the Brahman have the same system. A Gouṛ cowherd has been kept in some colonies to tend cows on

payment of grains and rations as a fixed rate per cow, bullock or calf. The Pāṣṭi already had such relation with washerman and Gouṛ in Tasiā for some time. Thus, there is great probability that the Pāṣṭi in the colony will be drawn into the "jajmani" system of some services as in the valley.

The Pāṣṭi Bhuiyān are traditional priests of village deities in Renāṅā, Kumudih, Jagatī, Mahulpadā, Barasū and perhaps a few other non-Pāṣṭi villages, and they are considered as the eldest occupants of land and hills (excepting specific case of Tasiā, where the Bhuiyān came later on). Also their ritual status in the Hindu eyes is the highest among all the tribal groups in the region. For all these reasons their social status is the highest among all tribals perhaps excluding the Hinduized Gouṛ in Mahulpadā region.

However, the Hindus hold the Pāṣṭi in contempt for certain of their practices, also found among some other local tribes. They do not wash with water after defecation. They yoke cows to plough, which is considered sacrilegious. The institution of dormitories, dancing of women, premarital sexual laxity, ignorance and illiteracy, general dirtiness of habits and of person, eating certain rats and birds including one which takes human night-skill, taking rotten meat of dead animals, and native beer, burying the dead, and perhaps a few other qualities and practices are looked down upon. Nonetheless, they highly appreciate their love of truth, steadfastness in friendship and promises, engaging hospitality, courage and endurance. However, the people of the valley are also afraid of Pāṣṭi Bhuiyān sorcery.

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(Note: C. Stands for Ch. in local terms)

## Status of Tribal Communities of Orissa

N. K. Behara

Orissa has a large concentration of tribal population in the country next to Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. There are 62 Scheduled Tribes in the State of Orissa, out of the total number of 427 in the Country. They range from very small groups to very large ones. The total tribal population of the State as per 1991 Census is 7,032,214, out of which 94.8 per cent live in rural areas and only 5.2 per cent in urban areas.

The tribes of Orissa are ethno-linguistically classifiable into three categories, namely (i) Austro-Asiatic (Mundari), (ii) Dravidian, and (iii) Indo-Aryan. Tribal communities belonging to the Austro-Asiatic category mainly inhabit North Orissa, excepting Bada Gadaba, Bonda, Didayi, Paranga and Saora who inhabit South Orissa. The tribal communities of the Dravidian category are mostly confined to South Orissa, excepting Orson, who inhabit North Orissa. And the tribal communities of the Indo-Aryan category are scattered all over the State. The important tribal communities of the Austro-Asiatic category in Orissa are: Bada Gadaba, Birhor, Bonda, Bhumija, Didayi, Juang, Ho/Kol, Kharis, Munda, Paranga, Santal and Saora. The Dravidian category includes: Gond, Kisan, Kandha, Koya, Ollar Gadaba and Orson. The Indo-Aryan category contains among others Bathudi, Bhuiyan, Bhumija and Saunti. Among the tribes of Orissa, the numerically superior ones are: Bathudi, Bhottada, Bhuiyan, Bhumija, Gond, Kharis, Kandha, Kisan, Kolha, Munda, Orson, Paraja, Santal, Saora and Shabar whereas the tribes that are peculiar or special to Orissa are the Didayi, Bathudi, Bonda, Juang, Kottia and Dongria Kandha.

Tribal communities belonging to Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian language families have their own spoken languages; whereas tribal communities of the Indo-Aryan category speak various regional dialects, which are variants of

the standard Oriya. Among the Austro-Asiatic tribal communities nine different languages are spoken, namely Sora (Saora), Gorum (Paranga), Gutab (Gadaba), Remo (Bonda), Kharis (Kharis/Mirdha), Juang (Juang), Santal (Santal), Mundari (Munda/Bhumija) and Ho (Ho/Kol). Among the tribal communities of the Dravidian language family eight different oral languages are spoken, such as, Konda (Kondadesa), Koya (Koya), Kuli (Phulbani Kondha), Kuvi (Koraput Kandha), Media (Media), Ollari (Ollar Gadaba), Parji (Paraja), and Pengu (Pengo Paraja). Various regional dialects spoken by the Indo-Aryan category of tribal communities include—Desia, Jharis, Matia, Shatri, Halbi, Bhunjia (all these are spoken in Southern Orissa), Bathudi, Bhuiyan, Kurnali, Saunti (all these are spoken in Northern Orissa), Sadri, Laria, Bhulia, Agaria, Binjia and Banjara (all these are spoken in Western Orissa).

Some of the major tribal communities of Orissa particularly the Santal, Ho, Saora and Kandha have devised scripts for their respective languages. And now they have started producing literature in their respective languages. In this venture Santals are ahead of others. During the past few decades, with the advancement of literacy and education, members of Santal, Munda, Ho, Saora, Kandha and Kisan tribal communities have been trying to steer new cultural identities for their respective communities through politico-cultural "Rank-Path".

A majority of the tribal communities of the State inhabit the Eastern Ghat hill range which runs across the State from South to North. Tribal communities are distributed in almost all the districts including those in the coastal belt. Didayi, Bonda, Gadaba and Koya in Southern Orissa and Juang in Northern Orissa live in compact areas, while Saora, Kandha, Gond, Bhuiya, Santal and Munda have a wide distribution.

Sections of Gadaba, Maria, Saora, Kondha, Bhuiyan, Juang, Bathudi and Bhumija have embraced Hinduism for a long time now. They propitiate a number of Hindu Gods and Goddesses and observe some Hindu fasts and festivals. Similarly sections of Munda, Oraon, Santal, Khasi, Saora and Kandha have been converted to Christianity. But all those who have either taken to Hinduism or Christianity have got completely eschewed their tribal heritage. They continue to profess Animism and facts of tribal culture. Rest other tribal people are Animists and retain their respective languages and tribal worldview. However, during past few decades the general tendency of all tribal people has been to fastidiously retain their respective ethnic identities for politico-economic gains. This is the outcome of the process of political modernisation which is going on during the past four decades. Educated members of Santal, Munda, Oraon and Ho communities have chosen 'political rank-path' in order to remove hegemony of non-tribals from their societies. However, notwithstanding the current processes of acculturation tribal communities of Orissa can be classified into the following six categories :—

- (i) Hunter-Gatherer-nomads living in hilly and forest areas and are somewhat isolated;
- (ii) Hunter-Gatherer-pastoralists and shifting cultivators living in hilly and forest areas ;
- (iii) Simple artisans living in hilly and forest areas ;
- (iv) Hunter-Gatherer-shifting cultivators living in hilly and forest areas and somewhat isolated;
- (v) Settled agriculturists, techno-economically somewhat on par with their neighbouring peasant communities; and
- (vi) The industrial and urban unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

The only tribe of the first category in Orissa is the Mankidi/Mankidia or Birhor. Members of this tribe are well known for their traditional practice of monkey-catching. Apart from depending upon hunting and gathering for subsistence, they also earn part of their livelihood from rope-making out of wild fibres. These tribal communities are mostly found in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Sundergarh districts. They

live in isolated small bands or groups. With their primitive technology, limited skill and inflexible commitment to custom and ritual observances, they lead a simple life in the forest. Their world view is tuned to the eco-system of their forest habitat. The population of Mankidia or Birhor in Orissa though is small, yet the type of impact its members exert on the ever-depleting forest resources is quite conspicuous.

The Koya inhabit the Malkangiri district. They are the only pastoral and cattle-breeding tribal community in Orissa. The main prop of the economy of the Koya is the practice of shifting cultivation coupled with cattle-breeding. In the past, when their habitat was serene, they used to supplement their livelihood by hunting and gathering of various food materials from the forest. Large scale deforestation in the Koya territory has taken place for the resettlement of refugees from Bangladesh. Traditional economy of the Koyas has enormously been affected.

In Orissa Mahali, Juang (Hindulud section only), and Kol-Lohara are the simple artisan tribal communities. The Mahali and Juangs practise basketry and the Kol-Lohara are blacksmiths by profession. Mahalis and Juangs are now confronted with the problem of scarcity of raw materials, and therefore they are hard-pressed. Similarly the Kol-Lohara, with their primitive technology, are not able to compete with machine-made agricultural implements in the market. These artisan tribal communities are getting more and more impoverished.

The tribes whose economy revolves around the practice of shifting cultivation in addition to hunting and gathering are many in Orissa. In Northern Orissa the Juang, Pauri Bhuiyan, Hill Kharis and in Southern Orissa the Kandhas, Saora, Parangs, Didayi, Dharua, Bonds and Koya practise shifting cultivation as their main economic pursuit. They invariably supplement their shifting cultivation economy by food gathering and hunting as production of shifting cultivation plots is low, shifting cultivation is essentially a regulated sequence of procedure designed to open up and bring under cultivation patches of forest lands, usually hill slopes.

In shifting cultivation the practitioners follow a pattern of cycle of activities which are as follows: (i) Selection of a patch of hill slope or forest land by the leadership of

the village, and distribution or allotment - of the same to the intended Practitioners: (i) cutting of trees and clearing of the existing vegetation from the land before summer months after observance of necessary religious rites; (ii) pilling up of withered logs, bushes and ferns on the land by women and children, and setting fire to them at an appropriate time; (iv) further clearing of the plot of land by both men and women and spreading of the ashes before the onset of monsoon rains; (v) hoeing and sowing of seeds with regular commencement of monsoon rains by both men and women; (vi) crude bunding and weeding activities follow after sprouting of seeds; (vii) watching and protecting the plants and crops till harvest through day and night; (viii) harvesting and collecting crops; (ix) threshing and storing of corns and grains and (x) observance of the closing ritual is accompanied by merry-making.

In the entire operational process all the members of the family are involved in some way or the other. Work is distributed among the members of the family. However, the head of the family assumes all the responsibilities in the practice and operation of shifting cultivation.

Shifting cultivation is not merely an economic pursuit for these tribal communities, it accounts for their total way of life. Their social structure, economy, political organisation and religion are all tuned to the practice of shifting cultivation.

However, shifting cultivation is a pernicious practice. It causes deforestation, soil erosion and degradation of land. By deforestation soil loses its water retention capacity. The sub-soil gets washed away and the underlying rocks and boulders are gradually exposed. Slowly and steadily the streams down the hills dry up. Heavy silts during the rains flow into the river basins, plains and valleys. Extensive deforestation influences the rainfall, and consequently, the life of the animals and forest resources are also affected. It also generates nomadic habits among the Practitioners.

In the past, land in the tribal areas of Orissa had not been surveyed and settled in the names of occupants. Therefore, tribal people wielded their traditional rights over the lands they occupied and freely practised shifting cultivation on forest-clad hill slopes.

There were two traditional systems of land tenure prevalent among the tribes of Orissa. Among the tribes of northern Orissa land, forest and other resources were communally owned, and thus the annual distribution of plots on the hill slopes for the practice of shifting cultivation were being done in a corporate manner. Whereas among the tribes of southern Orissa all such lands and other natural resources were under the control of the village (tribal) headman, who on individual approach used to allot plots to the intending practitioners. And since the emergence of the new forest policy in 1952, 1976 and 1988 and completion of survey and settlement of land in tribal areas, the traditional land tenure system has dwindled. The tribal people are now left with limited amount of land in their respective habitats for the practice of shifting cultivation intensively. In the past the recuperative cycle of shifting cultivation plots used to be 12 to 15 years; but now it has been reduced to 3 to 5 years. Thus, the productivity of the land gets progressively reduced. The practitioners of shifting cultivation are economically very much hard-pressed now. In Orissa an area of 1,55,842 sq. kms. is under the practice of shifting cultivation and a population of 2,62,72,054 is dependent on it (1981 Census).

In south Orissa, particularly in the habitats of Gadaba, Sora and Kandha tribal communities terraces have been constructed along hill slopes for the practice of wet-cultivation. This is a step towards settled agriculture. In terrace cultivation the available hill slopes are fully used and the available water of hill streams are tapped for cultivation throughout the year as water flows from one terrace to another in downward motion. The terrace walls are rivetted and packed with stones and boulders, which prevent soil erosion to a large extent. In these terraces paddy, maize and millets are grown.

In Orissa the category of settled agricultural tribes includes: Santal, Munda, Ho, Oraon, Gond, Desha Kandha, Savara, Kisan, Bhumiya, Bathudi and Gadaba. They also depend on forest, wherever possible, in varying proportion, for gathering and hunting. Tribal agriculture in Orissa is characterised by unproductive and uneconomic holdings, land alienation, lack of irrigation facilities in the upland areas, tenancy of the tribal habitat, chronic indebtedness, lack of easy or soft credit facilities and use of traditional skill and primitive implements. In general they raise only one crop during monsoon season, and

therefore have to supplement their economy by subsidiary economic activities, such as, seasonal migration to other places for wage earning. The impact agricultural modernisation on them is quite negligible.

A sizable agglomeration of tribal population in Orissa has moved to mining, industrial and urban areas for earning a regular living as wage-labour. Migration is almost a continuous process. Persons and whole families move either temporarily or permanently to mining locations, industrial sites and urban centres for wage-earning. During the past three decades the process of industrial urbanization in the tribal belt of Orissa has been accelerated through the operation of mines and establishment of industries. Mostly persons and families from relatively advanced tribal communities, such as, Santal, Mundla, Ho, Oraon, Gond, Kisan, Sayer and Kandha have taken to this economic pursuit in order to overcome their abject indigence.

In some cases industrialisation and mining operations in Orissa have led to uprooting of tribal villages, and the displaced have become industrial nomads. They lost their home, harsh and immovable assets. Thus, they have become unemployed and have been subject to unhealthy competition in the uncertain labour market. However, as a result of their exposure to urban culture the level of their aspiration in most cases has escalated, although they have no ability to fulfil their mounting aspirations. Thus, the net result in frustration, the process of tribal development has no ameliorative measures for the migrant tribal population. A package of development need be devised to halt the process of migration of tribal people to urban and industrial areas from their native villages. In the capitalist atmosphere of urban culture tribal people are losing self-confidence. Normally the personality of a tribal person is endowed with an overpowering sense of realism and pragmatism.

#### PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AND THE TRIBES OF ORISSA

The proportion of tribal population to the total population of the State is nearly 22.22 per cent, which is much above the national average of 7.78 per cent. Nearly 39.91 lakh tribal people inhabit an area of about 43.83 per cent of the total land surface of the State, specially declared as Scheduled Area; and 5.18 lakh tribal people reside in MADA, Cluster and Micro Project Areas. The rest of 14.08 lakh tribal people are dispersed in other areas of the State.

In terms of the concentration of tribal population the districts of Mayurbhanj (57.67 per cent), undivided Koraput (55.22 per cent), and Sundargarh (51.26 per cent) have more than 50 per cent each; whereas Keonjhar (44.82 per cent), Phulbani (39.94 per cent) and undivided Kalahandi (31.28 per cent) have more than 30 per cent each. In the remaining districts the proportion of tribal population is less than 20 per cent of the respective district population.

Constitution of India makes comprehensive provision for the Socio-Economic Development of Scheduled tribes and for prevention of their exploitation by other groups of the society. Article 46 of the Constitution requires the State (both Central and State Government) to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections and in particular, of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Up to the end of Fourth Five-year Plan period development of Scheduled Tribes was accepted as the general goal, and programmes were implemented through Community Development Blocks, Special Multipurpose Blocks, and Tribal Development Blocks. No special appreciation was made in the formulation of Schemes, keeping in view the needs of these communities and their respective core cultures. A detailed and comprehensive review of the problems of different tribal communities was taken up on the eve of the Fifth Five-year Plan period, and as a result the concept of Tribal Sub-plan was evolved. The Sub-plan approach has been in operation since the beginning of the Fifth Five-year Plan period. The main objectives of the TSP have been to develop the tribal communities and their habitats, and to protect them against exploitation.

Within the area of Tribal Sub-plan Integrated Tribal Development Projects or Agencies (ITDPs/ITDAs) were set up as nodal agencies to prepare plans for development to implement Projects, to co-ordinate sectoral activities and monitor the progress of works. In Orissa 21 ITDAs, have been set up covering 118 Blocks over an area of 86,516.68 sq. kms., and a Scheduled Tribe population of more than 33.70 lakh. The ITDAs are: (1) Baliguda, (2) Bripada, (3) Bona, (4) Champua, (5) Gunpur, (6) Jeypore, (7) Kaptipada, (8) Karanjia, (9) Keonjhar, (10) Koraput, (11) Kuchinda, (12) Malkangiri, (13) Nowrangpur, (14) Nilagiri, (15) Papapah, (16) Paralakhemundi, (17) Phulbani, (18) Rairangpur, (19) Rayagada, (20) Sundargarh, and (21) Thumal-Rampur.



Towards the end of the Fifth Plan period, Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) was adopted to cover smaller areas of concentration of tribal population. Thus areas, having 10,000 or more population of which 50 per cent or more were tribals, were earmarked as MADA pockets. In Orissa there are now 45 MADA pockets in operation covering 47 Blocks and a Scheduled Tribe population of more than 4.86 lakh. During the Fifth Five-Year Plan period too a decision was taken to treat the primitive tribal communities as special categories for whom specific core programmes were to be formulated and implemented for their all-round development. In Orissa 12 such groups have been identified, namely (1) Bihor, (2) Bonda, (3) Dideyi, (4) Dongria Kondha, (5) Juang, (6) Kheria, (7) Kutia Kondha, (8) Lanja Sora, (9) Lodha, (10) Mankidia, (11) Pauri Bhuiyan and (12) Sora. There are altogether 15 Micro Projects in operation in Orissa. Among the Pauri Bhuiyan there are two, and for the Lanja Sora there are three Micro Projects. These tribal communities have been identified as primitive on the basis of the criteria of their pre-agricultural economy, low level of literacy and inhospitable as well as isolated habitats. These 15 Micro Projects cover a Scheduled Tribe population of 42,464. And during the middle of the Seventh Five-Year Plan period (1985-90) small areas of tribal concentration, called clusters were identified. A cluster is a group of contiguous villages having a population of 5,000 or more, and 50 per cent of which must be tribals. In Orissa there are 13 clusters, covering 263 villages and a Scheduled Tribe population of 44,545.

In the Tribal Sub-Plan for the Eighth Plan (1992-97) document it has been mentioned that 45.09 lakh Scheduled Tribe population have been covered under ITDA's, MADA, Cluster and Micro Projects (1991: 1). The rest of 14.06 lakhs Scheduled Tribe population are dispersed in other areas of the State and are not covered under Special Tribal Development Programmes (1981 Census figures).

The adoption of TSP strategy has resulted in the growth of administrative machinery in tribal areas starting from the State level to Project areas. Protective laws enacted by Central and State Governments to check exploitation of tribals by unscrupulous non-tribals are in force. Nevertheless rapacious money-lenders and private traders are operating unhindered. Collection centres of Tribal

Development Co-operative Corporation have been set up in interior tribal villages for purchase of agricultural and minor forest produce from tribal people in order to ensure remunerative prices to them and protect them against exploitation. TDCC does not fulfil these objectives, because it is a part of the State administrative machinery. Collection and trading of certain items of forest produce such as, Sal seeds and Mohua flowers have been nationalised, which the tribal people cannot sell to non-Government agencies. This sort of State monopoly harms the interest of tribal people.

## SECTORAL PROGRAMMES

### Agriculture

It is the mainstay in the economy and livelihood of the tribal communities as 52.38 per cent of the total tribal workers are engaged in cultivation and 36.2 per cent work as agricultural labourers. They consider it more stable, independent and regular than the allied activities.

Productivity of tribal land is very low because of various factors. Tribal cultivator still clings to the traditional practices and is still dependent on irregular monsoon. Irrigation facility, system of input supply, provision of timely institutional credit, training in improved dry land farming, demonstration of multiple cropping pattern and dissemination of knowledge in crop diversification are yet to develop adequately in tribal areas. The tribal farmer has neither been properly motivated nor educated to adopt improved technology to increase agricultural production. Moreover, the present level of field demonstration is inadequate in tribal areas as a Village Agricultural Worker (VAW) has to cover 8-10 villages having 600 cultivating families. Sale outlets of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides are not sufficient in tribal areas. The district level Adoptive Research Stations are supposed to evolve appropriate agronomic practices for different eco-climatic areas. But in reality such institutions have not contributed to the development of agriculture among the tribal people.

### Soil Conservation

Soil erosion is an acute problem in the tribal habitat, because of rapid deforestation. In the slopy uplands top soil is washed away during monsoon for want of any conservation measures. Gully erosion is widespread on treeless slopy lands. Conservation measures

are not adequate to protect cultivable land being washed away by the run-off water causing ravines. The tribal is blamed for this, because he practises shifting cultivation on hill slopes. But he has no alternative source of livelihood; hence he practises it.

Soil conservation measures constitute a package which includes tree plantation, land development, water harvesting structure, soil conservation structure, vegetative stabilisation, building of mulchier canopy, conservation cropping, rehabilitation of degraded forest and construction of diversion channels. Tribal people will be the major sufferers of the menace of soil erosion, if soil conservation measures are not reinforced within shortest possible time.

### **Horticulture**

Like agriculture, horticulture too belongs to the core sector of tribal economy. Tribal people in general are good horticulturists, and their love for and knowledge of trees is remarkable. Fruit-bearing trees occupy a special place in the life and culture of tribal people. Horticulture is popular among the Saos and Dongria Kandha. Other tribal communities of course depend on fruit-bearing trees as alternative food items, such as, mango, jack-fruit, plums, berries, etc. With the plantation of fruit-bearing trees in areas where shifting cultivation is practised, more remunerative land use can be ensured, which will hold the prospect of improving the economic condition of tribal people.

Plant nurseries and fruit orchards be established in tribal areas in an extensive manner so as to attract tribal people towards horticulture. And they be persuaded and encouraged to take up plantation of short-term fruits like banana and pineapple in compact patches. Citrus plantation is quite rewarding, and tribal people be encouraged to take up this on Podu ravaged patches. And simultaneously fair price shops be opened in tribal areas extensively for purchase of tribal agricultural and horticultural produces. But wherever such shops are there, they do not function effectively and thus exploitation continues.

### **Problem of Land**

Land and forest constitute the resource base of tribal people. Usurpation of the land of tribal people is a major problem. Hence the urgent necessity of preparation of correct record-of-rights and updating them rests with the

State Government. In the absence of correct land records, which confer both title and possession, the tribal people face difficulties in availing credit facilities from institutional sources; and as a result unscrupulous money-lenders usurp their land. Revenue Courts and Civil Courts also find it difficult to uphold the rights of the tribal people in the absence of up-to-date records.

### **Co-operation**

Co-operative institutions are expected to play a significant role in the socio-economic development of tribal people. Their exploitation in the field of credit as well as marketing can be checked if co-operative institutions function as per their objectives. They continue to be exploited in the sale of their surplus agricultural and minor forest produces. They are by and large ignorant of the cumbersome procedure of co-operative institutions.

Procedural training programmes be conducted among the tribal people so as to attract them in a big way towards co-operative institutions. Besides, forest labour contract co-operative societies be organised in potential areas to save the forest labourers from exploitation.

### **Forest and Development of Tribes**

Forest plays an important role in the life of tribal people. It caters to their basic needs by providing food, water, fibres, fodder, timber and saleable minor forest produce. The life and culture of the tribal people are closely linked with the forest.

The economy of several tribal communities, particularly those of the primitive groups, revolves around forest and forest produces. Minor forest produce constitutes 15 to 50 per cent of the income of several tribal families. Therefore, forestry programmes will have to be designed in accordance with the socio-economic fabric of the tribal communities. The linkage between development of forest and development of tribes be strengthened notwithstanding the loss of 8017 sq. kms. of forest between 1983 and 1987, because the tribal people alone cannot be held responsible for this ravage.

The evolving national forest policy has steadily eroded the traditional rights of tribal people on forest from 1952 onwards. Their rights have been converted into certain concessions. Tribal people cannot be alienated from forest.

### **[ Animal resources and the tribes**

Traditionally animal husbandry has been an important secondary source of livelihood of tribal people. Rearing of milch and draught cattle, as well as smaller animals and birds has been an inseparable aspect of tribal life. Tribal people domesticate goats, pigs, poultry apart from cattle.

Appropriate low-cost livestock be provided to the tribal people for raising the level of their income. These animals be selected keeping in view the geo-climatic condition of the intended beneficiaries. Extensive training programmes in animal husbandry be conducted for tribal beneficiaries. Dairy and poultry co-operative be organised for the benefit of landless tribal people. Arrangement for regular marketing of milk and poultry be made, and timely availability of veterinary services be ensured. In tribal areas animal health care services are inadequate. In the TSP area there are 177 Veterinary Hospitals and Dispensaries to look after 55 lakh bovine population. This is utterly inadequate.

### **Health and Family Welfare :**

The objective of Health Policy of the country is to provide health care consisting of preventive, promotive and curative services to all sections of the society. All these services are relatively poor in tribal areas. In pursuance of the National Health Policy it is proposed to establish one P. H. C. for every 20,000 population and one Sub-Centre for every 3000 population in tribal areas. At the moment health care services are utterly inadequate. Therefore, primarily for this reason tribal people continue to depend on their traditional practices. Their shamans or medicine men administer herbal medicines and alongside perform magico-religious rites whereby the victim is forced to make improvident expenditure.

### **Drinking Water-Supply:**

The problem of providing safe drinking water in tribal areas is acute because the sub-soil water level is very low. Out of 19,204 villages in the TSP area, the State Government have identified 17,148 villages as drinking water problem villages. A State Government document states

that by the end of Seventh Plan Period 16,014 villages have been covered, and the rest 1134 villages would be attended to during the Eighth Plan Period. However, the empirical situation is indeed different.

### **Road communication :**

Tribal areas are deficient in road communication. Villages in tribal areas are scattered and dispersed and do not have proper road communication system. Unless a proper network of roads in the far flung tribal areas is developed the tribal people and tribal areas will continue to be neglected. The geographical condition of the tribal areas in the State demands construction of a large number of small bridges and cross drainage works to make the communication all-weather. Improvement of the system of communication is a necessary pre-condition for socio-economic and educational development.

### **Human resources development and Education.**

Education and human resources development is a key factor for sustaining development of tribal people.

Due to geo-historical reasons the tribal people of the State of Orissa, were generally in a State of educational and economic backwardness. There are 62 Scheduled tribes who speak as many as 74 languages/dialects.

Education is a basic input of development which generates awareness and consciousness. It sensitises a person about all the phenomena around him. Scheduled tribes are educationally backward than others. There are many hindrances in the promotion of education among them. Firstly sending of children to schools entails economic loss and dislocation in the day-to-day activities of the family. During the agricultural season boys work in the fields with their parents and girls keep on watching the younger children. There are other constraints too, such as, teacher-pupil communication barrier, medium of instruction in pre-primary classes, curriculum, school timing, location of schools, indigence of the family, parental attitude etc.

From the available literacy figures it is evident that Scheduled Tribes are educationally backward. But literacy is not education.

#### PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY IN ORISSA

| Decadal Year | State Average |        |       | Scheduled Tribes |        |       |
|--------------|---------------|--------|-------|------------------|--------|-------|
|              | Male          | Female | Total | Male             | Female | Total |
| (1)          | (2)           | (3)    | (4)   | (5)              | (6)    | (7)   |
| 1951 ..      | 34.7          | 8.6    | 21.66 | 13.00            | 1.8    | 7.36  |
| 1971 ..      | 39.3          | 13.09  | 26.02 | 16.4             | 2.6    | 9.6   |
| 1981 ..      | 47.10         | 21.12  | 34.75 | 23.27            | 4.76   | 13.96 |
| 1991 ..      | 62.37         | 34.40  | 48.55 | ..               | ..     | ..    |

However, literacy is an essential aspect of human dignity. Education is equated with acquisition of systematic knowledge, mental and moral development through instruction. It leads to improvement of faculties and broadening of vision.

The State Government have established different types of schools for tribal students. An idea can be made about them from the following table:—

#### LIST OF SCHOOLS FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS

| Sl. No. | Type of Schools        | Within Sub-Plan Area | Outside Sub-Plan Area | Total number of Schools |
|---------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
|         |                        | (3)                  | (4)                   | (5)                     |
| (1)     | (2)                    |                      |                       |                         |
| 1.      | Sevashrams             | .. 690               | 342                   | 1032                    |
| 2.      | Residential Sevashrams | .. 54                | 40                    | 94                      |
| 3.      | Ashram Schools—        |                      |                       |                         |
|         | (a) Boys               | .. 45                | 25                    | 70                      |
|         | (b) Girls              | .. 20                | 9                     | 29                      |
| 4.      | High Schools           | .. 89                | 40                    | 129                     |
|         | (a) Boys               | .. 31                | 6                     | 37                      |

There are 1,032 Sevashrams which are non-residential Primary Schools; and there are 94 residential Sevashrams (Primary Schools). All Ashram schools are Residential Middle Schools. There are 70 such Schools for the boys and 29 for girls. The total number of High Schools, both junior and senior, is 1,651 and out of this 129 are meant for boys and 37 for girls. These High Schools have residential facilities both for boys and girls. Besides there are hostels at the State capital for S. T. and S. C. students. Facilities like award of Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships, supply of free nationalised text books, reading and writing materials, beds, utensils, garments and special coaching are available to the S. T. students.

Although such provisions attract a large number of tribal boys and girls, there has been simultaneously a large number of drop-outs from Schools, particularly at the Pre-Primary and Primary levels. Poverty is the major factor of drop-outs. There are other factors, which include lack of parental awareness, inadequacy of hostel facility, non-availability of light type of teachers, delay in payment of stipend and lack of communication facilities. Residential Sevashrams will serve to reduce the magnitude of drop-outs at the Pre-Primary and Primary levels. In the State only 9 per cent Sevashrams are residential.

All these schools impart general education, which enables the educatees to be eligible for clerical and such other jobs. There is no effort to improve the quality of human material. There should be planned effort for development of human resources.

### Conclusion

Tribal Development activities are being carried out in an impersonal bureaucratic manner. No individual attention is being paid to the weakest among the weak. Similarly, an attempt is made to overcome individual deficiencies. Establishment of a socialistic pattern of society though is the goal of the nation the development process creates class system among the erstwhile homogenous people. The twenty-ninth Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes points out this dualistic system which is getting established in the country. It states that: "The modern organised sector comprises the upper segment of this system while the traditional unorganised sector comprises the lower segment consequently even among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, two different segments are getting established exactly in the same fashion" (1990:1).

Mahapatra also corroborates this phenomenon. He states that tribal leaders working with self-interest create cleavages in their own community (1977:7). He further states that: "The resources which are flowing for the economic benefit, it is often complained, are cornered in several devious ways by their own 'brethren' belonging

either to the profession or even their own elected representatives" (Ibid).

The educated tribal elites in most cases have become "marginal men" in their own societies. They do not hesitate to exploit even their own brethren. The unlettered, ignorant and simple-minded tribesman still finds himself in the immensity of darkness and scourge of poverty.

### SUGGESTIONS

1. There should be long term perspective planning, on the basis of population projection, to remove indigence and make provision of the basic needs in order to ensure a minimum standard of life.
2. The problems or preparation of record of rights of the lands of tribal people be taken up on priority basis by a committee consisting of bureaucrats, lawyers, and social scientists.
3. Tribal traditional rights over common property resources be restored. Their entitlements must not be ignored. If this is ignored sustainable development cannot be ensured.
4. All Sevashrams (Primary Schools) be converted to residential type to prevent rampant drop-outs.
5. Law may be enacted to eliminate the well-off tribal people from the provision of constitutional safeguards, so that justice can be done to the deserving ones amongst them.

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## A Study of the Process of Change in the life of the Primitive Tribes in Mayurbhanj, Orissa

Rajalaxmi Rath

Mayurbhanj is a predominantly tribal district and is inhabited by almost all the major tribes of Orissa. As per 1981 Census the Tribal population of the district is 901 lakhs, which is 58% of the total population of the district. As such, the district accounts for the highest concentration of tribals in the State of Orissa followed by Koraput (55%) and Sundergarh (51%). 53 different tribes are found in this district, the major among them being the Santals, Kols, Hos, Bhuiyans, Bathudis and the Gonds. Each of these 53 tribes have their own distinctive life style, cultural heritage as well as separate dialects.

The large number of hills and dense forests located at the centre of Mayurbhanj district, stretching over a vast area of nearly one thousand five hundred square miles, constitute the Similipal hill range. Out of the geographical area of 2576 lakh acres of the district, an area of about 6 lakh acres is under forests. Only about 10 lakh acres are cultivable land, the rest of the land being unsuitable for agriculture. Although there are some activities on such sectors like mining and quarry, industries and services, yet the economy is based predominantly on agriculture and forest produce. About 85% of the people of the district depend upon agriculture as their main occupation, yet it is ironic that most of the people of the district are landless and work as labourers. About half the people earn their livelihood as daily wage-earners. Out of this population of nearly 8 lakhs who work as labourers, 5 lakh belong to the Scheduled Tribes. More than half such working force are tribal women numbering about 3 lakh.

The Hill Kharas and the Mankirdias, who are the object of our study are two of the early settlers of Mayurbhanj district. At present they live in and around the Similipal hill range of the district. The entire population of the Kharas,

in Mayurbhanj amounts to 14,985 (1981 Census). They are primitive in all respects. Their socio-economic condition is far below the poverty line. The Hill Kharas is one of the sub-sectors of the Kharas tribe. The Hill Kharas are semi-nomadic and live inside the Similipal hills. The Hill Kharas settlements are generally situated on hill-slopes, high-ridges or in jungle clearings. Since they are primarily food-gatherers and hunters, the Similipal hill surroundings provide the right abode for them. They earn their livelihood from minor forest produce like roots and tubers, honey, arrowroots, resin, gum, tassar, cocoons etc. Often they move into deeper forests for three to four days a week, stay in leafy hutsments, collect as much as they can and return to their settlements to exhaust what they have collected during the rest of the week.

However, many of them also move to other parts of the district in search of livelihood. Therefore, some of them are found interspersed with local peasant communities in certain parts of the district. Their association with the general population has created an interest in them to take up agriculture and Animal Husbandry. Being largely landless, resourceless, unskilled and illiterate, most of the Hill Kharas population primarily thrive upon wage earning as agricultural labourers. But the other section of Hill-Kharas, who have stayed on in their original forest habitat have remained primitive, backward and conservative. This significant difference between both these sections has brought about social, cultural and economic dichotomy of the Hill Kharas of Similipal hills and the less primitive Hill Kharas living elsewhere in Mayurbhanj (Report on Hill Kharas and Mankirdia Development Agency Gudgudia (Mayurbhanj) 1986-80 : Pg. 9).

According to the 1991 Census the Mankirdia population in the whole of Orissa is 1,207 and only 379 in the district of Mayurbhanj (Tribes of Orissa; H. T. W. Department, Government of Orissa; 9). They are nomadic and fall into the category of hunting and food-gathering group of Scheduled Tribes. Their economic activity consists of trade relations and exchange transactions with local peasants. Instead of being settled up in a particular place permanently, they live in and around the Similipal Hills. They reside at a place temporarily in leaf-huts and wander from place to place within a circumscribed area in search of food and collection of minor forest produce. These Mankirdias are analogous to the Bihars of Bihar. The reasons why the Bihars are called Mankirdia is that they love eating monkey's meat and are also experts in catching monkeys. In British India they were accused of Cannibalism. The belief persisted that the Mankirdias who were once upon a time cannibals would fondly feed upon the flesh of a dying man and therefore would assemble in the house at the time of the death of a fellowman. But over a period of time cannibalism has given way to eating other animals, particularly monkeys.

The Mankirdias are an aboriginal group originating from the same Kolarian sources as their more developed brothers like the Mundas, Santals, Hos and Bhuiyans. They have migrated from the Chhotanagpur plateau area of Bihar since long and have adopted the cultural traditions of the local ethnic groups while maintaining many of their original characteristics. They speak a dialect of their own, which is an admixture of Mundari and Santali words. Now some of them have started understanding and speaking Oriya due to intermittent contact with the local populace.

The Mankirdias are dark-skinned, short-statured, long headed, wavy haired and broad nosed in appearance. They move from place to place in different groups of 10 to 15. These wandering bands are called 'Tandas'. They shift their 'Tandas' or settlements in search of livelihood in new areas according to their nomadic way of life. Each family constructs a leaf-hut called 'Kumbha'. They set up their settlements in clearings, inside dense forests where 'Siali' creepers, animals particularly monkeys and forest produce are available. The "Kumbhas" are scattered roughly in a circular path leaving an open space in

the middle to conduct dances, communal activities and daily routine works. The Kumbha or the leaf-hut is a dome-shaped hut made of Sal leaves (Shorea Robusta) roughly 5—7 feet in diameter. The entrance to the hut consists of a rectangular arched opening about 3' x 2' in size and is closed with a detachable leaf door at night. The leaf-hut is so well-built that not a drop of water soaks into the hut even during the heaviest downpour. The Mankirdias, cook, eat and sleep inside these Kumbhas. Even their pet dog, pig and fowl live with them in the same hut. The Mankirdias have simple household articles made of mud. Mud vessels are used for storing water and also for cooking. They also possess a knife or some sharp implement for digging the earth. They sleep on locally made mat and being very hardy and tough, do not supplement their beddings even in the bitterest of winter.

They are experts in rope-making out of Siali (Lama Beyer) fibres and weave mats out of date-plam leaves, which they use for sleeping. The siali ropes are made into nets for catching games especially monkeys. The siali ropes and mats are very important for them, for they live by trapping and hunting. Due to their expertise in catching monkeys they are called upon and employed by local people to catch monkeys when they create havoc in rural areas. Their women are robust, well-built and hardworking. They are the true companions to the men in the life of utter hardship. Like their other tribal counterparts they even earn for their family besides looking after the home and hearth.

#### Identification of primitive Tribes

Out of the population of 410 lakh Scheduled Tribes in the country different tribes are at different stages of development. The Chenchus, Juangs, Kadar, Kurumba, Andamanese, Bihor, etc., are the notable food-gathering tribes of India. These tribes subsists by hunting and catching animals and by collecting fruits and roots from the forests. With the result they totally depend on nature. The most backward among them have received the attention of various study teams. The Dhebar Commission (1981) appointed by the Government of India, identified the tribals to be in four different stages of development. At the base level, the Commission identified a class of tribals at an extremely under-developed stage. They felt

that this lowest layer needed the utmost consideration. Hence they recommended that these sections should be made the special concern of the respective State Governments. Moreover, the Chief Executive Officers concerned with the implementation of the policies for protection and development of these tribes should be instructed with special responsibilities.

Another study team on Tribal Development Programmes known as the Shikha Ao Team (1968), reiterated the view of the Dhebar Commission that this 'lowest layer' needed utmost consideration. They suggested to the Government to separate those who had benefited from the development programmes of the Government and identify the really backward communities for special attention (Report of the Working Group on Tribal Development during the Sixth Plan, 1980-85 October, 1980, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi). Consequently, detailed guidelines were issued for identification of primitive tribal groups. The guidelines *inter alia*, stated that these groups have to be distinguished from impoverished groups and that a 'primitive' group need not necessarily be poor. In the identification of primitive groups, States have generally followed these norms which are—

- (i) Pre-agricultural level of technology,
- (ii) Low level of literacy, and
- (iii) Stagnant or dwindling population

Each family is considered as a distinct unit for the programme. On these guidelines 52 Communities, has been identified as primitive till the end of 1979-80 in the whole of India and 9 in Orissa. Later on few more tribes were added to the list of primitive tribe. In Orissa 12 tribal groups have been identified as primitive. They are: (1) Bondo, (2) Soora, (3) Kharis, (4) Mankirdia, (5) Kutia Kondh, (6) Paudi Bhuians, (7) Juang, (8) Lanja Soora, (9) Dangria Kondha, (10) Didayi, (11) Loda, (12) Birhor.

Going by the standards set by the various Commissions and Study teams the Mankirdia and Kharis fall into the group of "Primitive Tribes" and therefore deserve special attention for development. As we have discussed earlier, their total population in the district of Mayurbhanj is 14,885 (Kharis) and 378 (Mankirdias) as per 1981 Census. These two primitive tribes not only lead a primitive way of life but also

maintain a seminomadic existence. They subsist by hunting and food gathering. Literacy is at a very low level of 3.09 per cent. Moreover, mass poverty, inaccessible habitat and the use of simple and rudimentary tools are the characteristics of both the tribes. Their natural habitat is inhospitable and incapable of supporting the minimum level of human existence. Depletion of forest resources due to extensive deforestation as well as new regulations against hunting and gathering forest produce inside the protected forest areas have put hurdles in the lives of these tribal people. Similipal forest area, the natural abode of the Kharis and Mankirdias has been declared as a 'National Park' and a 'Reserved area'. The ambitious 'Tiger Project' is also under operation in this area. Under these circumstances the Kharis and Mankirdias are side tracked and find little or no scope to carry out their traditional economic activities. There are also a large number of other problems like dire poverty, high illiteracy, unemployment and under development, malnutrition and ill health, alcoholism, many forms of socio-economic exploitation, which accounts for the general backwardness of both the communities.

The first attempt was made by the administration in the late seventies to check the nomadic habits of these two 'Primitive tribes' and to settle them in colonies. Efforts were also made to provide them with alternative sources of livelihood like land livestock and other facilities, which would allow them into leaving their traditional subsistence ways. The idea was to rehabilitate them so that they can become part of the mainstream of society. These attempts proved futile and in no time the primitive tribal people deserted their colonies and went back to the forests because the schemes for rehabilitation were neither properly thought out nor carefully implemented. Those who had got a house had not been provided with land or even the facilities of agriculture and irrigation. To add to it these settlements were far away from the land allotted to them. The helpless tribals had no way but to go back to their leaf hutments, into the deep forests and search for food at least to whet their appetite. They used their hands at alternative and crude cultivation in the forest tracts but here too they met with little or no success. Most of their cultivable lands were gradually usurped away by the local *sahukars* and prosperous neighbours reducing them to landless poor. Some members of the communities ultimately



landed up as wage-earning labourers who were exploited and never given a fair wage.

The shortcomings of the earlier schemes prompted the Government to devise more effective schemes by introducing innovations and improvements. On the basis of the data collected after a diagnostic survey taking into consideration the background of the primitive tribes, several micro projects have been formulated to accelerate the process of development of the newly identified primitive tribal communities. In this background the Hill Kharis and Mankirdia Primitive Tribes Development Agency, Gudgudia in Mayurbhanj district has been constituted in the year 1985 by the Government of Orissa under the supervision of the Harijan and

Tribal Welfare Department. This project has been functioning since January, 1987. For the flexibility and decentralisation in administration the Agency has been registered under Societies Registration Act, 1930. This micro project is one of the nine such micro projects currently under operation in different areas of the State for the development of the nine primitive tribes of Orissa.

The total geographical area of the Agency is 129.73 sq. kilometres. The scheme is exclusively meant for the 'Hill Kharis' and 'Mankirdias' living in 21 identified villages in the Karanjia and Jeshipur Blocks of Mayurbhanj. The household and population of both the groups of people are given in the table below:—

| Community         | No. of Households | Population (1991) |         | Total |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|-------|
|                   |                   | Males             | Females |       |
| (1)               | (2)               | (3)               | (4)     | (5)   |
| 1. Hill Kharis .. | 399               | 698               | 691     | 1,387 |
| 2. Mankirdia ..   | 39                | 71                | 59      | 130   |
| Total ..          | 438               | 767               | 750     | 1,517 |

It was decided that time-bound programmes shall be executed by the Agency within a period of four years. These programmes had imbued in them the broader objectives of bringing about integrated socio-economic development of both these primitive tribes, taking care to see that they cater to the felt-needs, problems, attitudes and aptitudes of the beneficiaries. The assistance was provided under various heads.

#### Rehabilitation

Priority was given to rehabilitating the beneficiaries and giving them houses to live in. Both the tribes live in very poor and sub-human housing conditions. A survey undertaken by the Agency not only spelt out this need but also the desire of many of the beneficiaries in this direction. Housing sites at Kandamundi for the Mankirdias and at Gudgudia for the Hill Kharis were selected by the project authorities in due consultation with the leaders of both the communities. Kutcha houses with tiled roofs made by locally available tiles were conceived of at a cost of 1,500 each. The scheme was on a 100 per cent subsidy basis to be implemented in a phased manner. Financial assistance of Rs. 100.00 per year for three consecutive years per house was decided to be given for repair and maintenance.

#### Agriculture

It was decided by the Agency to stress upon agriculture in order to give them a settled economic base. Both the tribes depended on forest produce for their livelihood. Both were ignorant of any type of cultivation. The Hill Kharis had somehow taken up unsystematic and crude cultivation in the high and dry forest tracts, but the nomadic Mankirdias had never taken to cultivation. In order to earn their livelihood and live decently the project aimed at not only giving them some agricultural land but also basic agricultural facilities like irrigation and training in agricultural methods, etc. It was the aim of the agency to see that agriculture should become their primary means of livelihood. So far the Kharis's main occupation was gathering forest produce of many kinds, which they bartered with the neighbouring population whereas the Mankirdia's traditional occupation was to catch monkeys and make ropes, mats and mats, etc., out of gull leaves. It was felt that once these semi-nomadic and nomadic tribes were given a pucca house, some land and facilities for agriculture, it would give them a sense of possession and hold them at one place and prevent them from wandering about the forest.

### **Livestock**

The project also decided to give some domestic animals like cows, goats, sheep, fowl, ducks, pigs, etc., which the tribal people would rear and thus generate an additional income.

### **Cottage Industry**

The project also decided to promote the skills of the Kharis and Mankirdias by giving impetus by way of cottage industry. Their skill in collecting forest produce and rope-making were noted. They were given bee-boxes, machines for tussar weaving, rope-making machines, leaf-plate making machines in easy instalments so that they could earn more money. Necessary training in all these cottage industries was also provided to the beneficiaries, sometimes with small stipends as encouragement.

### **Infrastructure Development Programmes**

Both the primitive tribes lived in extreme poverty and illiteracy. These two basic shortcomings were tackled with utmost care. The project provided facilities and incentives for pre-school, primary and higher education. Besides, it was also decided to impart adult education to adult members of these communities. Health of the beneficiaries being an important aspect, proper attention was given to the facilities for health care. It was decided to supply nutrition and immunisation facilities to the pre-school children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

The above programmes were drawn up after conducting careful surveys of the diagnostic type, taking every single unit of family into consideration by the authorities. It was thought that such an approach would be of help to evolve suitable strategies and formulate specific Action Plans for the development of these primitive communities.

Equipped with the above clear-cut strategies and allotments from the Harijan and Tribal Welfare Department, the Agency with the Project Officer as the key plunged into the implementation of the programme. The task was onerous as it involved total displacement and then rehabilitation of the beneficiaries. Based on data it is seen that after four years of development activities, much has been achieved and the impact has spread to the 19 villages inhabited by 411 families, out of which 38 are Mankirdias and 373 are Hill Kharis.

### **Impact of the Scheme on the Beneficiaries**

After four years of working of the Agency it is observed that the administration has helped the tribal people in many ways. The Kharis-Mankirdia Micro Project, Jashipur, has helped several families develop their agricultural land allotted to them by the Government. Paddy, Arhar, Maize, Miller, Mustard and Groundnut are being cultivated. The Agency has provided pump-sets and Lift Irrigation Poles in some fields. Care is also being taken to supply bullocks with insurance covers to help in ploughing and sprayer machines to spray insecticides when required. Fertilisers are also supplied at a highly subsidised rate to facilitate better crops. The development of a kitchen garden in the backyard in almost every household is remarkable. Now they have planted Mango, Banana, Cashew, Sisal and Pineapple Plants. Majority of the families have taken to kitchen gardening. Saplings are supplied free of cost to them in order to provide incentive to them. Though only a few families have taken to tree plantations, yet the impact is nevertheless noted.

The Micro Project has provided one room houses to 218 families under the RLEGP and to 15 families under the Indira Awas Yojana. For development of cottage industries, many families have been supplied with leaf-plate making machines, bee-boxes have been provided for the Kharis. Moreover training has been imparted to them in the art of bee-keeping and honey extraction. Several domestic animals like cows, fowls, pigs, ducks, etc., have been given to beneficiary families. In order to help those who want to start some business, rickshaws, cycles, trailers, fishing nets, etc., have been supplied with low rate of interest on the money advanced. Two Mankirdia women have been given training in tailoring to supplement the family income. Education being the prime mover of a society and being a very important indicator of the degree of transformation a community has attained, immense stress was given to this sector. Every settlement has one room set aside for this purpose. Primary education being very crucial, this room hardly of 200 sq. ft. serves the small children. The charge of imparting them early education was given to one of the village youths who had some minimum education. Data shows that till March, 1991, 304 students belonging to these settlements had been enrolled in the nursery and primary section, 3 in the higher secondary section and 1 in college in and outside the colonies. 466 adults had been

enrolled in the adult education training (information sheet : HKMDA : Jashipur : 3).

In order to reduce the high mortality-rate, care was taken to supply hygienic surroundings, clear drinking water, immunisation, free medicines and vitamins to children and pregnant mothers alongwith mid-day meal by the Child Development Project Officer under the ICDS Scheme.

One of the Settlement hamlets taken up by the Agency as situated at Matlagada, a village about five kilometres away from Jashipur and only about 1 Km. away from the National Highway. The approach to the colony is lined on both sides by a sisal plantation on an area of about 100 acres. This is indeed the first positive sign that some attempt at development of the Kharis was being undertaken. The Horticulture Department had provided the sisal saplings and the Hill Kharis Mankirdia Development Agency was looking after the measuring and protection, by providing enclosure of these trees. The sisal trees were healthy and robust. The Kharis people tilled and cleared the area around the plantation to help its proper growth, out of which they even earned their daily labour payment, which was meted out by the HKMDA, Jashipur. These sisal (Muiga) trees were used for making ropes and for decorating the wheels of cycles, after colouring them brightly. The money obtained from the sale was used by them for their daily needs. Sisal required only rain water and could yield for seven years at a stretch and the plants being hardy and thorny hardly required care and grew well on the rocky road side.

The Matlagada Settlement Colony lay at the end of this hilly tract and the temporary kutcha road leading to the hamlet was quite good. Thirty families of the Kharis tribe had been rehabilitated and settled in thirty, one-roomed houses built under the Indira Awas Yojana. Each house had a little verandah but the householder had managed to add a small mud kitchen at its side to cook in the day and tie the livestock (if any) at night. The houses lined up either side of a Kutcha road and were few feet away from each other. It is a new settlement started in the year 1990. The colony looked rather out of place since the Hill Kharis whose lives are symbiotic with the forests had been dumped here, away from their natural sylvan surroundings.

Their original village was just a few kilometres away where they used to work as labourers for the other tribal groups like Kol's and Majhi's. They were always mistreated by these affluent tribals and were threatened with eviction from their huts at the slightest pretext. For the Kharis of Matlagada village the settlement hamlet at Matlagada with the help of the Hill Kharis Mankirdia Development Agency (HKMDA) was thus a blessing in disguise. At least they were masters of their own houses and meagre belongings.

There was a tube-well, a hand pump in the centre of the settlement village, which provided them with drinking water. Few families had started a kitchen garden and planted Papaya, Sejana (drumstick), Sag, etc. The only tube-well and the rain-water were the only source of water. Hence, they faced problem in watering the plants. Each family had got about half acre agricultural land to be used for cultivation but the scheme was a far-dry from what was envisaged in it. Agriculture had yet to catch-up as irrigation facilities were absent. Being semi-nomadic in nature these primitive tribes had hardly ever practised agriculture. Most of the male members go to the forests few kilometres away to collect fire-wood and other forest produce. In spite of the restrictions imposed on their entry into the Reserve Area of the forest, minor forest produce continues to be an important source of income for them in spite of all the development schemes planned for them. They sneak into the forest and collect them and live in constant fear of being nabbed by forest officials on duty.

The headman of the village happened to be also the oldest Kharis man. He had changed his abode six times to six different villages and had ultimately settled in the Matlagada settlement colony and was happy there. Contentment was writ large over his innocent, ageing, wrinkled face. In some families household economic activity consisted of making leaf plates and cups, and selling them in the local 'Har'. Few families had fowls, pigs, goats, etc., but infighting between the dominant tribes in their previous villages of Kolh tribes and Majhi tribes led to their killing and hiding of the livestock. The ICDS Scheme for feeding children in the age-group of 0-6 and pregnant mothers, was being implemented here. It was a sight to see the children carry the ICDS meal from the nearby village in a bucket and distribute it among the beneficiaries. The

settlement being few kilometres away from the town, care had been taken to provide one or two beneficiaries with either a cycle or a rickshaw on a very nominal interest and on a very easy instalment basis.

The present Kharla Settlement gives the look of a colony inhabited by tribals uprooted from their typical forest background and dumped in barren surroundings with just a roof on their heads. It will not be long before their cultural heritage will suffer and they are going to feel lost unless corrective steps are taken.

The Kharla male members when questioned felt that the Government schemes were certainly praiseworthy but due to lack of irrigation facilities the land yielded little or nothing. They face hardship for a greater part of the year. They praised the erstwhile Maharajas of Mayurbhanj whom they never seemed to forget. They mention it again and again especially in the songs they sing while gaily beating the drum indigenously made out of goat skin.

The journey to Kumsadabadia, another Hill Kharla Settlement is a long, risky and arduous one. The 15 Kms. drive from Jashipur ended at the foot of a sloping hill, in a settlement of 16 houses. This hamlet was established in the year 1988. This Kharla tribal settlement was in an environment similar to the one they had left behind. The surroundings are full of tall trees and hill slopes and with a spring of water nearby. This area is in sharp contrast to the Matigada Village Settlement. The thick forest had some clearing on the hill slopes where 16, one-roomed houses were built under the Indira Awas Yojana. Tal, Asan, Sal, Neem trees surrounded the hamlet and the setting was idyllic.

The HKMDA had financed a cashew plantation behind the houses at the foot of the hill. Once again the tribal people of the hamlets looked after the manuring and watering of the plants in turn for which the HKMDA paid them daily wages. They tried as far as possible to give each male beneficiary a chance. The project had supplied resin in the Asan trees and the beneficiaries collected resin, lac, etc. They were also trained in bee-keeping, and bee-boxes were supplied free of cost. The beneficiaries had the opportunity to collect honey and sell it at the fixed Government price to the Government Co-operatives or Agencies. There was a positive change in the life-style due to the Government sponsored schemes.

With the Project's encouragement and supply of saplings to the tribal settlers here, they had also taken to kitchen gardening by planting Papaya, Sug, Sejana, Lemon etc. This being an older settlement looked a little better than the Matigada settlement. Most of the young men and women either worked as labourers in nearby villages or go into deeper forests to collect the jungle produce firewood. There is a small school, a one-roomed house kept aside both for primary and adult education. It is a definite improvement on the facility they had before. Even though the school room is small dingy and one corner of the room is full of white-ants, yet it is encouraging to see that the children have learnt to read and write alphabets.

Their food consisted of tubers, which is found in plenty as their settlement was amidst the forest and coarse rice pounded at home. In one or two house the young house wife pounded rice patiently. These tribes were really hardworking and even in the bitter winter days they have to manage with one piece of cotton cloth on their bodies. They revealed that they resorted to nature cure and used herbs when they fell sick but used allopathic medicines when effected by Malaria, which was common in this hilly area. Once a while the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) visits the area and supplies medicine and gives advice on health care. The beneficiaries had to travel a lot to collect drinking water as the only tube-well in the settlement yielded water which was red due to the presence of iron.

The Markidia Settlement Village at Durdura is about 65 Kilometers from the district headquarters at Belpada and around 5 kilometres from Jashipur. The approach road from the National Highway is a Kuchra road but quite accessible and an entrance gated to the colony of 22 houses. The one-roomed houses had been built by the Indira Awas Yojana. The colony have the distinction of being inaugurated by the then Governor of Orissa in the year 1988 and there is a marble plaque to that effect at the entrance. Their old village from which they had been shifted is very close to the new settlement area. Every house had a net hanging in front of their house by which they still caught games and trapped monkeys. In spite of all the schemes proposed by the HKMDA, and in spite of all the steps taken for their development the tribal people here still resorted to hunting and collecting forest produce, which peculiarly was still their main source of livelihood, in

the day time the young male and female Mankirdias either collected forest produce, made rope out of 'Siali Creepers' or tried their hand at some form of agriculture. But lack of irrigation facilities was always a big hindrance to agriculture. They sweated hard during the day labouring or tilling but as dusk fell most gathered ground fires chattering and making 'Siali' Ropes. They even make a few articles out of Siali ropes for sale in the Hat. The project had also taken care to train two young Mankirdia women in sewing and tailoring so that they could earn their livelihood. They had provided two leg-machines at easy instalments from banks so that they could stitch new clothes for neighbouring villagers or alter old clothes and earn something.

The Project tried to improve the economic condition of the tribal people but there was a gap in the formulation and implementation of the programmes. A lot had been done but seen from close quarters the impact could hardly be perceived. The Mankirdias still went to forests for hunting, collecting tubers and Siali Creepers. Four to five Mankirdia families still lived in 'Kumbhar' inside this settlement village.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The Hill-Kharis and Mankirdias living in and around the Simlipal Forest Range have been identified as the two most primitive tribes in the district of Mayurbhanj. In view of their extreme backwardness, poverty and destitution, extremely low level of technological development, lack of any assets or resources, almost negligible literacy and nomadic life-style, the Government has drawn up a Micro-Project for their rehabilitation and development. The primary objective of the project is to wean them away from a life-style of hunting and food-gathering and provide them alternative sources of income alongwith a settled life-style. For the effective implementation of the various sectoral schemes of development, the Government established the Hill Kharis and Mankirdia Development Agency at Gudgudia, (Mayurbhanj) in December 1986.

The HKMDA has identified 399 Hill-Kharis families and 39 Mankirdia families with a population of 1,387 and 130 respectively, spread over 21 hamlets. As the basic prerequisite of a settled life, almost all these beneficiaries have been provided with small

pucca houses built by the help of the Agency. Many families have been given Government land alongwith some other inputs for agriculture. In very few cases sources of irrigation have also been provided by the Agency. The Agency has also encouraged some of the beneficiaries to adopt new income-generating practices, like animal husbandry, horticulture and cottage industries like rope-making, bee-keeping, leaf-plate making, tailoring, etc. Atanpt has been made to provide a school room with a part-time worker, tube-wells for drinking water and health-care facilities in a small way.]

The efforts of the Government in settling these nomadic tribes have achieved success to a certain degree. The Hill-Kharis and Mankirdia families are more or less residing in the colonies built for them. However, other programmes of rehabilitation and development are yet to take off. These primitive tribes can be lured into a settled life permanently only if they are induced to take to agriculture and allied activities. But unfortunately this is yet to materialise. Although they are residing in the houses for them, yet they have not taken to the life of a farmer for various reasons. Temperamentally they are not fascinated by the agricultural practices of the present day. To make things worse they have hardly received any other input or follow-up action except some barren land from Government. They do not have the inclination to improve these wastelands for the purpose of farming. As such, agriculture has remained a non-starter in their economic life. The scenario in other sectors is not very different either. It is a fact that some families have planted fruit bearing trees at some rehabilitation colonies. A few are rearing goats, pigs and fowls. Bee-boxes have also been given to some families and a few of them have produced some honey. But these examples of economic activity are few and far between. The vast majority of these tribals have not been benefited by these schemes. It appears the schemes are either not up to their imagination and skill or are implemented half-heartedly. No doubt some effort has been made but there has been no positive result in generating any income for the family.

Any scheme designed to develop the Kharis and Mankirdias must begin with the realisation that these primitive and nomadic tribes are at an extremely low level of technological development in the process of evolution.

They have no economy other than earning their livelihood by hunting and food-gathering. They have no resource or skill to use to earn their bread. From times immemorial the forests have provided succour and sustenance to these tribal people. They have a symbiotic relationship with the forests, which are the only resources from their point of view. They have been depending upon forests for their games, fuel and various minor forest products. After introduction of several forest regulations their free entry and movement in the forest has been drastically curbed and the access to the minor forest produce virtually eliminated. Although the forest policy aims at providing certain rights and concessions to such tribes, yet in practice such facilities are not being allowed to them. The relevant provision of the National Forest Policy of 1988 is quoted below —

The life of tribals and other poor living within and near forests revolves around forests. The rights and concessions enjoyed by them should be fully protected. Their domestic requirements of fuelwood, fodder, minor forest produce and construction timber should be the first charge on forest produce.

In spite of this clear stipulation in the forest policy the Hill Khasias and Mankirdias are deprived of their traditional and customary rights over the forest produce. Almost all of them living in the settlement colonies complained of harassment and inconvenience in the hands of the forest officials. They felt that their entry into forests is unnecessarily restricted. It is interesting to note that they understand the need to conserve and develop the forests. According to them they protect the forests instead of destroying them and only use the minor forest produce as their source of income. They appear to be quite reasonable and convincing. Whereas, it is the duty of the forest department to stop illegal felling of trees and the clandestine timber business by the influential men, it is unfair on the part of the forest officials to deprive these poor tribals of their means of livelihood. Entry of these tribes into the forest to collect minor forest produce like honey, mahua flowers, oil seeds, resin, herbs, roots tubers etc., the forests are not going to be destroyed. In fact many of them sneak into forests and collect the forest produce of and on. But they live in constant fear and uncertainty of harassment and persecution.

It is evident that the Hill Khasias and Mankirdias families are residing in the colonies built by Government only as a temporary measure. If other components of the Scheme are not implemented on a priority basis in a reasonable time-frame, they are likely to be disillusioned and may go back to their nomadic life. Many of the families settled in the colonies do not hide their growing disenchantment to the above problems and inconveniences they face in their new abodes. Based on the above study it is worthwhile to make a few recommendations for more effective implementation of the project for rehabilitation and development of the Khasias, Mankirdias.

1. The Hill Khasias and Mankirdias Agency needs to be strengthened with greater inputs of manpower, material and funds to initiate, supervise and monitor their programmes of rehabilitation and development more effectively. Persons with proper attitude and motivation should man these agencies and successfully implement these programmes with necessary dedication and zeal.

2. Care should be taken to choose any further settlement hamlets as close as possible to the sylvan surroundings since the tribal people are so emotionally attached to such an environment and also depend on the forests.

3. Entry into forests to collect firewood, food and minor forest produce may be regulated, not drastically curbed.

4. Better land plus better irrigation facilities should be provided to the greatest extent possible. Seeds, fertilisers and other agricultural inputs should be provided free/subsidised rates. Technical know-how of agriculture, and training should be imparted regularly so that these tribal people are motivated to take to cultivation and settle down as farmers.

5. Education is the prime mover of a society. There should be mass literacy programmes to cover all the adult Hill Khasias and Mankirdias both male and female. This should be able to develop a mass consciousness among the parents to think of the education of their children as compulsory. The children of these primitive tribes should be able to receive primary education in all the rehabilitation hamlets. They should also get access to schools outside the village in the higher classes.

6. Communication and transport facilities in this area must improve. This not only gives a feeling of nearness but also instills sense of confidence for they do not feel cut off.

7. Activities in other sectors like animal husbandry, horticulture and cottage industry should be further encouraged. Necessary training with stipends should be imparted. Proper tie-up with raw-material and marketing should be arranged and enforced.

8. Finally, Voluntary and Social Welfare Organisations must be involved by the Government in the Hill Kharis and Mankirdis development agency's rehabilitation programmes. The

voluntary agencies should be mobilised not only to supplement the schemes of the Government but also to ensure greater flexibility in the implementation of the programmes. No development programmes will succeed without the active involvement of the people. The rehabilitation programmes of the HKMDA have far so remained purely Governmental programmes without any participation by people's representatives. It is absolutely necessary to involve the voluntary agencies, peoples representatives, and opinion leaders among the beneficiaries, in the formulation and implementation of these schemes. Such popular participation will not only introduce greater flexibility in the programmes but also ensure mass support.

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# Ethnic Aspects of Indian Sago Palm (*Caryota Urens-L*) An Ethno-Botanical Study Among Kutia Kandha

Mihir Kumar Jena

Klaus Seeland

Kamala Kumari Pattanaik

## ABSTRACT

The traditional uses of Indian Sago Palm (*Caryota urens-L*) by Kutia Kandha of Phulbani district of Southern Orissa are usually not known by many. The present paper, therefore, deals in these plant species which are intimately interwoven in the social, cultural, ceremonial and many other functions in the traditional life styles of Kutia Kandha. Along with the precise description of the plant, the indigenous way of fermentation and extraction process of Toddy (liquor) from the plant parts are given. Toddy is considered as the sole source of food and energy for Kutia Kandha living in southern parts of Orissa. The data were collected during the Ethno-Botanical Tour Programme made by the authors.

## Introduction

Many authors have collected certain information on the studies on ethno-botany in different tribal areas (Rai et. al—1970; Saxena and Dutta—1975; Mishra and Dubey—1991-92; Pal—1980; Pal and Bannerji—1971; Sahoo—1986; Choudhary et. al.—1975 etc; of Orissa State. None of them has reported on a particular plant species, which has a significant role on the social, cultural, ritual life style of Kutia Kandha. Hence, in the present investigation attempts have been made to study in detail about the traditional relationship between Indian Sago Palm (*Caryota urens—L*) and Kutia Kandha of Phulbani district.

Kutia Kandha is one of the many different tribes among the Kandha Tribe, the study on which is of great fascination among research scholars so far as their organization, cultural pattern, and ethnicity of life style are concerned.

Most of the people belonging to this tribe are living in between tracks, i.e., in the dense forest surrounded by hills and mountains. The Kutia Kandha are not fully pastoral or agricultural-based people. Mostly they live upon the forest product like tubers (digging cut of the earth), fruits and wild pot herbs, leafy vegetables, etc.

Hunting is also another important criteria in their life style. They procure and consume animal flesh as their prominent and luxurious additional food. Scanty agricultural output from land, non-availability of food during lean periods have made them to go for liquors produced in any form. They collect toddy from certain plant species (distilled/fermented liquor prepared by their indigenous method). This habit is not socially prohibited irrespective of sex and age. Taking liquor is approved by the society both in ceremonial and religious functions. The environmental condition viz, the high terrain topography and climatic factor have made them somehow perpetual addicts.

Country toddy is usually collected from date palms (*Phoenix Sylvestris*), the tree being extensively available in tribal localities. However, the sago palm (*Caryota Urens*) is an important species in southern part of Orissa. In the present investigation the style of access of Indian Sago Palm Tree to the life of Kutia Kandha residing in Belghar, of Phulbani district of Orissa is studied. Besides attempts have been made to study the association of this plant to their ethnicity in various magnitude of their social and cultural life. Association of Kutia Kandha with this tree (*Caryota Urens-L*) is known from time immemorial. This is also known as in English kitul palm/The Fish tail



**Sago Palm.** According to Kutia Kandha it is popularly known as Madama (Mada means Toddy, Mara means Tree). In Oriya it is known as SALAP.

#### Abbreviations

KK—Kutia Kandha

E—English

O—Oriya

#### DESCRIPTION OF CARYOTA URENS SAGO PALM

Sago Palm trees are fairly common in some part of Agencies Area of Orissa (Haines, 1921—25). The seed keeps up its dormancy for a prolonged period. The periods of dormancy overcomes after two to three years and starts germinating in suitable environmental conditions. The tree attains a height up to 15 to 20 feet with leaflets (somewhat like those of maiden hair fern). Leaves 10 to 12 feet broad, petioles very stout. Inflorescences of the tree usually come out during October-November and remain fresh till March to April. The stem is erect, unbranched, round and smooth. Sometimes saplings are planted in kitchen garden and at the side of the avenues. According to Kutia Kandha this tree grows better on hill slopes and foot hills than in any other place. A tree can produce Toddy up to three years before it withers. The tree attains its maturity at about 15 to 20 years.

**Preparation of musical drum from root base** (KK—Daki, E—Root base, O—Muli)

Different parts of Sago Palm trees have contributed a lot to the material culture of Kutia Kandha. A musical drum [KK—Tapka], mostly used in occasions like Mariah festival / [KK—Bisakina, E—Animal Sacrifice Ceremony], new year festival/ [KK—Punikulu] is made out of the root base of this palm. The dome shaped root base, which is hollow at the top and blunt at the bottom, is cut from the palm of various ages after they die. The external lateral roots are cleaned by sharp edged knives. Each of such cut pieces look like a bowl. A tanned skin [preferably of a cow] is then cut into size to tie over the open end of the bowl shaped root base. A young, tender and flexible bamboo stem [KK—Manisira] is used as a rope to tie the skin over the open space in order to make it more tight and perfect. Gum [extracted from a herb called Jrikani (KK)] is pasted around the flexible bamboo. That makes the perfect musical drum.

A matured tree trunk is cut into two equal halves in a longitudinal section with the help of an axe. The two hollow pieces obtained from it are used as drain to irrigate crop fields.

#### Process of Collecting Sago

The stem of young palm is more important because its pith generally contains a good quality of Sago. The pith (KK—Jendi, E—Pith, O—Manja) is collected at the premature death of a Sago Palm. Sago is collected and sundried. They use the Sago in different ways, viz., simply boil it to make their food, prepare chapati out of the flour, prepare various types of cakes on different occasions. Dried Sago is also stored by the tribe for use in the lean periods.

#### Yielding Strong Fibre From Leaf Sheath

Fibres collected from leaf sheaths are very strong. They use these fibres for tying up the culm of the cleaning broom [*Thysanofrena maxima*]. *T. maxima* is known to them as "Satrenga" and its inflorescence is known as "Saperika". The culm of the plant is finely cut and sharpened. They are tied together with fibre (extracted from the Sago Palm leaf sheath) to make combs. Besides, they use the plant fibres for preparing strings of musical instruments, net to trap birds and jungle fowl and snares to catch small wild animals for their food.

#### Yielding "Toddy" from Inflorescence (KK—Kama) and Pith (KK—Jendi)

The inflorescence are considered as the best part of the plant for collecting Toddy. They simply make fresh transverse cut [about half an inch] from the hanging terminal end of the inflorescence. Then they tie the earthen pot at the neck of fresh cut end. This process is done successively thrice in a day [morning, mid-day and evening] during summer and twice in winter.

Each time a fresh cut is made in order to avoid blockage of Toddy flow, which may occur due to drying up of the terminal end or for any sort of infections, etc.. However, they also prepare Toddy out of pith. Sometimes, Toddy is used to cook meat in the forest when water is not available. However, the Toddy helps in maintaining a thermodynamic balance between the body and the surroundings in different seasons.

## Indigenous Fermentation process (KK-Madang Malpaa)

The Toddy is sweet because of its high sugar content. Very sweet Toddy sometimes causes loose motion. Among the tribe, different age-groups of both male and female folks consume Toddy. They are aware of the fact of the low and high power of the fermented Toddy and they are also conscious of allowing particular drink of specific power to a particular agegroup. Hence, according to the needs of the age-groups, they ferment the juice at the time of collection. However, they adopt the indigenous method of their own to specify the power of fermentation for different agegroups of male and female folk. They select bark of *Holarrhiza antidysenterica* (KK-Kude mara, O-Kuduchi), root bark of *Cassia fistula* (KK-Pundeni mara, O-Suneri, E-Indian laburnum/Pungling Cassia), root of *Cissampelos pareira* (KK-Dindidipa tulla, O-Akanbendi, E-False Pareira Brava), bark of *Mangifera indica* (KK-Maskamara, O-Ambs, E-Mango) and fruit of *Bauhinia vahni* (KK-Poritulla, O-Slati) as the major fermenting agents. Huskless grains of *Oryza sativa* (KK-Kulliga, O-Dhana, E-Paddy) and *Panicum miliare* (KK-Kuani, O-Suan, E-Little millet), are common fermenters. These are generally kept inside the pitcher to collect the juice, before the pitcher is tied to the cut end of inflorescences. The knowledge about fermentation of Toddy is inherited from generation to generation. The process is very simple. As per the required power/strength of the Toddy, the selected part is kept inside an empty earthen pot-masnt for collection of Toddy. It appears these plant parts help Toddy to ferment quickly within 8 to 12 hours without any difficulty.

## Property Ownership

The tree is a valuable property of Kutia Kandha, because of this nutritious Toddy. In fact, Toddy plays an important role in making a tribal society mentally, physically and socially fit to carry out their work efficiently. The trees are owned either individually or familywise. But the person who plants it gets its ownership. Sometimes the family owned trees are divided among the family members. However, women ownership is rare among the tribe.

The owner reserves the right to tap inflorescence of the tree for the Toddy. In the event of the owner's inability or old age, he chooses a man who would collect the juice from his tree. After the owner dies the tree is transferred

to his family members, mostly to sons. In most cases, it is the will of the owner, that decides the future owner of the tree. He may transfer his ownership to his legacy holders or to his relatives or any other person belonging to his village.

Some tribal people have divulged that in ancient days liquor was prepared from the tree like *Mangifera indica*, *Madhura longifolia* (KK-Puja mara, O-Mahula, E-Mowra butter tree), *Artocarpus heterophyllus* (KK-Pansi mara, O-Penas, E-Jack fruit), *Musa sapientum* (KK-Tide mara, O-Kadali, E-Plantain) and molasses. But Toddy from Sago Palm tree is considered as the best among such liquors. Toddy is sometimes sold at a rate of one dumuni (a unit) for one rupee. Good yielding trees are sometimes sold at a rate of maximum one thousand rupees per tree. However, procuring the most valuable Toddy from Indian Sago Palm is the "inherited tradition" among Kutia Kandha from time immemorial.

## Sago Palm Trees—A Place For Social intercourse

The place where the people sit and drink the Toddy is called Madangbasa. This place is specially chosen by the people for reciprocating their thoughts, ideas, aims, feelings, decisions, etc. In a forest where there are more than one Toddy plant tree, people choose to sit under the Youngest tree or at a place where Toddy can be brought conveniently from the collecting spot. Many decisions pertaining to village conflicts and misunderstanding for attending court for miss purpose, choosing new forest patches for shifting cultivations and many other type of decisions are often decided at Madangbasa with mutual discussion. Discussions, affecting other's sentiments and thoughts, or hampering social welfare, are however not entertained at Madangbasa. They use a big spoon called Dumuni made out of gourd of *Lagenaria picearia* (KK-Anka, O-Lau, E-Bottle gourd), to distribute Toddy equally among people participating in the discussion.

Guests are specially treated with an extra Dumuni of Toddy. It is also customary to offer a Dumuni full of Toddy to a friend for mutual interaction. Female folks, who occasionally visit the "Madangbasa", are served Toddy separately. On no occasion this method of distribution is neglected. In other words, every individual is entertained with Toddy at Madangbasa.

In almost all the rituals Toddy is offered to their gods and goddesses and mainly to their ancestral spirits (KK-Dukali). In case of the death of an owner of the tree, his successor has to perform witch puja during his first Toddy collection. On this occasion, astrologers (KK-Gutika), priest (KK-Jari) and headman (KK-Majhi) of the village are invited to the spot. The astrologer invokes the owner's spirit and chants "We are cutting your trees for Toddy. May your goodwill be with us. May your tree secrete sweet, tasty and plenty Toddy for our children (KK-Mildali)." Then the Toddy is distributed among themselves according to the status and age.

When the owner of an immature tree dies, his soul has to pass through a critical test in a queer manner. If the Toddy collected from the tree (when the tree attains maturity) is plenty and sweet in taste, then it is believed that the departed soul had good and healthy feelings for the village folk. Or else, he is blamed as a wicked person.

If due to any unknown reason, a palm tree yields less Toddy, they go through a ritual. The village astrologer performs a puja by offering rice, leaves of *Beshtia vahli* and *Thamra arundinacea* (KK-Bika, O-Chhona, E-Thatch grass) to the tree to detect the evil spirit and to satisfy it. Fruits of *Semecarpus anacardium* (KK-Ganju, O-Bhalia, E-Marking nut tree) is kept in a packet secretly inside the tree to avoid the evil eyes of the spirit.

In many cases they get a positive result and thus they become contented. However, the relationship of such rituals with the secretion of Toddy is ambiguous to others.

## Aesthetic Scenario

In certain folk songs the aesthetic sense associated to the tree is often sung. In one folk song about the tree, their affinity for the Toddy is reflected. It goes like this.

"There was a Sago Palm tree.

Its Toddy developed my appetite.

I drank it to my full satisfaction.

It developed my addiction and hunger also, which demanded more, I went for it and could have it. Then I slept a sound sleep."

A conversation of love between lovers is represented in a Koraputean Kandha folk song which reads as "Made mare alinaga dkeritaka rinaga, pipeta bulangade.....".

Further, the Toddy replaces pains and agony, sorrows and sufferings with smiles for Kutia Kandha.

## Conservation Policy

The tree is cared by the Kutia Kandha for its contribution to their social life, cultural patterns, aesthetic sense.....etc. The people deeply love this tree as it provides them with food and drink. It has also provided a lot to their art, craft and material culture. The Toddy plays its role in relaxing the pain from hard labour of the day and, is indispensable for rituals and festivals. Its contribution has motivated them to preserve and conserve the species in their locality. Planting a Sago Palm tree and dedicating it to the interest of the local people is the noblest deed which visitor can do to be ever remembered by Kutia folks. The tree stands as a mother, providing its Toddy—the elixir vital—by having which people of all age-groups survive and enjoy. Kutia Kandha, thus, feels ill at its ill, well at its well.

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# Indigenous Practices in Health Care

Saraswati Swain

Traditional medicine has been defined as "that of whole, which includes a holistic knowledge and practice, oral or written, functioned in diagnosis, preventive and curative aspects of illness and disease to promote total wellbeing". Hence the approach is holistic with blending of physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing. Its use is global. Even in the face of sophisticated western system of medicine it has thrived and is the only system available in the undemerved areas of the country. Some of the methods practised by them, even though are harmful by our understanding, some have been found to be positively beneficial and scientifically sound. They represent an autonomous system supported by the community. While the Allopathic drugs are not only not available but have been found to be very expensive. The country has to pay hard currency for importing them which gradually is depleting our already low foreign exchange reserve. The cost is expected go up still higher after the present signature of GATT Agreement.

WHO rightly had taken steps to establish collaborating centres of the traditional medicine for exchange of ideas/views so that the knowledge could be made available to all.

While the background is well set, and the wind has started blowing in its favour, the plants/herbs/methods are facing serious extinction due to deforestation, urbanisation, industrialisation, etc. Admixture with other systems has naturally started. Unless vigorous attempt is undertaken, most of the methods would disappear and would become extinct.

Therefore, the present attempt is only to document the method/system right from the traditional healers residing in the most interior parts. The authenticity needs to be proved. It would take longer time including growing the plants in herbal garden and undertaking of animal and human experiments and such other scientific methods.

The present write up relates to methods practised to prevent conception. In some cases the English and Botanical names were not available and hence has not been mentioned.

## NAME OF PLANT/METHODS USED FOR CONTROL OF CONCEPTION

- |               |   |                     |
|---------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. Raktachita | .. Local name   |                     |
|               | English name  | : Fire Palm         |
|               | Botanical name  | : Plum/Sago Rosea   |
| Preparation   | .. 4" of the root of the above plant is ground, made into a paste and is given to the client only once. |                     |
| Restriction   | The medicine should not be given if the client is pregnant.   |                     |
| 2. Champa     | .. Local name   |                     |
|               | English name  | : Pagoda tree       |
|               | Botanical Name  | : Michelia Champaca |
| Tundu Poda    | .. Local name   |                     |
|               | Botanical name  | : Toddalia Asiatice |
| Raktachita    | .. Local name   |                     |
|               | English name  | : Fire Palm         |
|               | Botanical name  | : Plum/sago Rosea   |

|                |    |  |
|----------------|----|--|
| Preparation    | .. | Roots of all the above plants are dried and ground separately. Equal parts of the above powder is mixed in ghee prepared from cow's milk and tablets of the size of peanut are prepared. The client is given 3 tablets a day from the first to the 3rd day of menstruation. Process is repeated for 2 consecutive months.              |
| Restriction    | .. | Client should not take hot and cold food. Water rice is prohibited.  |
| 3. Kaincha     | .. | Local Name<br>English Name : Crab's Eye<br>Botanical Name : Abrus Precatorius  |
| Preparation    | .. | $\frac{1}{2}$ " of the root/bark of white Kaincha is ground with 22 black pepper. The mixture is divided to 3 parts, client is asked to take 1 dose each on 3rd, 4th and 7th day of menstruation.  |
| 4. Pana Patra  | .. | Local Name<br>English Name : Betel leaf  |
| Sweta Kanchara | .. | Local Name<br>Botanical Name : Bauhinia Variegata  |
| Tundupoda      | .. | Local Name<br>Botanical Name : Toddalia Asiatica   |
| Gandhik        | .. | Local Name<br>English Name : Sulphur   |
| Preparation    | .. | Equal part of roots of Tundupoda and Sweta Kanchara plant with one betel leaf and a little of sulphur is ground to make into a paste. Small pills of the size of blackgram are prepared and it is dried in Sun. Client is asked to take one pill a day on 5th, 6th & 7th day of menstruation and the process is repeated for 3 months. |
| 5. Akanabindi  | .. | Local Name<br>Botanical Name : Cissampelos Pareira   |
| Preparation    | .. | Juice of the leaf of the plant is given to the client on the 5th and 6th of menstruation.  |
| 6. Champā      | .. | Local Name<br>English Name : Pagoda tree<br>Botanical Name : Michelia champaca   |
| Preparation    | .. | Juice of the leaf of the above plant is given to the client mixed with water stored over night.  |
| 7. Pichukuli   | .. | Local Name   |
| Preparation    | .. | Roughly 12 grams of the bark of the plant pichukuli mixed with 10 number of black paper is made into a paste which constitute one dose.  |
| Administration | .. | This is given to the client twice daily for 7 days   |
| 8. Hingu       | .. | Local Name<br>English Name : Asafoetida  |
| Preparation    | .. | Asafoetida of the size of blackgram is put inside a ripe banana and the woman is instructed to take it on the 1st day of menstruation, this prevents conception for rest of life.  |

## BOOK REVIEW

### CHANGING VALUES AND TRIBAL SOCIETIES

(A Comparative Study of the Munda and Oraon Values Orientation)

SRIVASTAVA, A. R. N.

1992, (Foreword: E. Pendleton Bank), 294 P;

20 Figs.; 52 Tables; Appendices;

Bibliography; Index; 23 cms.

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D-17 Raja Garden, New Delhi-110015

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The superstructure of the book rests on the conceptual foundation of variations in Value-Orientations laid by the intellectual luminary in the field of American Cultural Anthropology, Clyde Kluckhohn and his associates, whose contributions have been duly reflected and acknowledged by the author right from his Preface. The methodological perspective of the study manifests 'replication-verification' based on empirical data on two tribal communities of Bihar i.e., the Munda and the Oraon in similar eco-systems. A learned foreword by Professor E. Pendleton Banks stimulates insight into the study and predicts for future researches in the line. All the 17 chapters of the book have been well-knit, sophisticated and systematic. The methodology of research has been explicitly spelt out to "examine the Variations in Value-Orientations within a culture as well as between the cultures. ....".

The study adequately highlights the demographic features of the tribes of Ranchi district in general and the Oraon and the Munda tribes in particular and their cultural profile. Further, the composite Value-Orientations profiles of the two tribes have been discussed. The chief attraction of the study centres round the variations in Value-Orientations in relational area, time area, Man-Nature area and activity area. The author has significantly dealt with the inter-group variations in these respects, emphasising dominant and variant forms of value-orientation. The author has meticulously analysed the data through application of statistical methods including Kendall's Ranking method of determining consensus. The findings show that there has been agreement in two areas i. e. relation area and time area, whereas disagreement in Man-Nature and activity area. The general findings and specific findings presented by the author are still more fascinating. In the relational area, "in spite of a large number of disagreements there are patterns in Dominant and Variant Preferences, and these patterns are ranked". In the time area, "Both within-and-between groups variations are observed in the Dominant Patterns of the Value-Orientations. Present over future remains the most occurred pattern among the Oraon and Munda". In the Man-Nature area, there are more agreement within the group choices among the two tribes. In the activity area, among the Oraon the Dominant Preference is the Being over Doing Orientation and in case of variant it is just the opposite, whereas among the Munda, the Dominant Preference is the Doing over Being and the variant is just the opposite. The author is confident and emphatic through studies by others and his study that the tribes in Bihar are changing fast.

The Appendix 19 which contains the Schedule for study of Value-Orientations is extremely instructive for the future researchers on similar line in cross-cultural perspective.

To conclude, the present study which incorporates the dynamics of change in value system has conceivable implications in the field of planned development intervention.

K. K. MOHANTI

Editor, Adivasi

# OUR CONTRIBUTORS

1. Professor L. K. Mahapatra  
2. Professor N. K. Bhowra  
3. Dr. Rajlaxmi Rath  
4. Shree Mihir Kumar Jena  
5. Klaus Speelard  
6. Smt. Kamala Kumari Pattnaik  
7. Dr. Saraswati Swain  
8. General Secretary, National Institute of Applied Human Research and Development, Kariyan Nagar, Cuttack-13.  
9. Paraja P.-G. Department of Botany, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.  
10. Paraja P.-G. Department of Botany, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.  
11. Paraja P.-G. Department of Botany, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.  
12. U. G. C. Research Scientist, P.-G. Department of Political Science, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.  
13. A/147, Sahed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007  
14. Sanyanagar, Bhubaneswar-751007